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**The Framing of Chelsea Manning in Opinion Articles on Al Jazeera
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Pro gradu -tutkielmani tarkastelee sitä, miten yhdysvaltalainen tietovuotaja Chelsea Manning on kehystetty Al Jazeera Englishin mielipideartikkeleissa. Lisäksi kiinnitän erityistä huomiota siihen, millaisessa laajemmassa kontekstissa kehystäminen tapahtuu. Tutkimani aineisto koostuu 34:stä Al Jazeera Englishin internetsivuilla vuosina 2010-2013 julkaistuista mielipideartikkeleista.

Asetan Manningin osaksi länsimaista ja erityisesti yhdysvaltalaisista tietovuotamisen perinnettä, johon hänen lisäksi kuuluvat myös esimerkiksi Pentagonin paperit 1970-luvulla vuotanut Daniel Ellsberg, vuonna 2013 NSA:n verkkovakoilun laajuuden paljastanut Edward Snowden ja ne valtion virkamiehet ja alihankkijat, joita vastaan on tietovuotojen vuoksi käyty viime vuosina oikeutta. Tämän perinteen sisällä medioille on arkipäivää käyttää nimettömiä lähteitä ja tietovuotajia, koska he paljastavat tietoa, johon tiedotusvälineet eivät muuten pääsisi käsiksi. Myös internetin kuuluisimmalla tietovuotosivustolla WikiLeaksillä on tärkeä asema Manningin tarinassa, koska hän vuoti tiedostonsa nimenomaan WikiLeaksille, joka julkaisi ne yhteistyössä valtavirtamedioiden kanssa.

Tutkimusmenetelmänä käytän kehysanalyysia, jonka keinoin selvitän, millaisiin kehyksiin Manning asetetaan Al Jazeera Englishin mielipideartikkeleissa. Näitä kehyksiä löytyy tutkimastani aineistosta viisi. Ne ovat yleisimmästä harvinaisimpaan tietovuotaja (englanniksi whistleblower), uhri, sankari, petturi ja transsukupuolinen. Näistä tietovuotaja eräänlainen yleiskehys, jolle alisteisia uhrin, sankarin ja petturin kehykset ovat. Toisin sanoen Manning kuvataan uhriksi, sankariksi ja petturiksi koska hän on tietovuotaja. Transsukupuolinen puolestaan on tietovuotajan kanssa rinnakkainen kehys, ei sille alisteinen, vaikkakin trans-identiteetin vaikutusta Manningin tietovuotajaksi ryhtymiseen pohditaan aineistossa.

Tärkeimmäksi aineistossa esiintyviä kehyksiä yhdistäväksi tekijäksi nousee käsitys, jonka mukaan Yhdysvaltain hallinto on moraalisesti korruptoitunut ja yhteiskuntajärjestys rikki. Muun muassa se, että Manning koki moraaliseksi velvollisuudekseen vuotaa tämän korruptoituneisuuden paljastavia tietoja, sekä se, miten Yhdysvaltain viranomaiset häntä kiinnijäämisen jälkeen ovat kohdelleet, ovat artikkeleiden mukaan oireita tästä sairaudesta, jonka kourissa Yhdysvallat on.

Vaikka mielipiteiden perusteella ei voi tehdä lopullisia johtopäätöksiä Al Jazeera Englishin suhtautumisesta tietovuotamiseen ja tietovuotajiin, Manningin positiivinen kehystäminen viittaa kuitenkin siihen, ettei se ole ainakaan hänen tekojaan vastaan. Koska median valta on nimenomaan määrittelyvaltaa, ja koska median tarjoamat määritelmät vaikuttavat yleisöjen asenteisiin ja ideologioihin, Al Jazeera Englishin mielipideartikkeleiden myönteisellä suhtautumisella tietovuotajiin on potentiaalisesti vaikutusta myöhempiin tietovuototapauksiin.

Avainsanat: tietovuotaja, kehys, kehysanalyysi, Al Jazeera English

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1 Introduction

Seen from the helicopter, the houses below look like building blocks and the cars like toys. All the colours are reduced to shades of grey. The picture zooms in on a group of people walking down a road. "Have five to six individuals with AK47s. Request permission to engage," a voice says. Permission is granted. The helicopter starts to move around the building for a better view, several voices state that they have seen an RPG (a rocket-propelled grenade, more commonly known as a rocket launcher), and the firing starts. People on the ground fall. The chopper continues to circle the location, keeping an eye on a wounded man trying to crawl away. Then a van turns up, and a couple of men begin to help him. For the second time, permission to engage is asked and granted, and bullets rain down on the van and the men. When the ground troops arrive moments later it turns out there were two children in the van, both of whom were wounded in the attack and taken to a local hospital.

This, in short, is the content of a video titled "Collateral Murder", an edited version of footage that was recorded aboard a US army Apache helicopter hovering over a suburb of Baghdad in Iraq on July 12th, 2007. It was leaked to the whistleblowing website WikiLeaks, which gave it its first public screening at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C., on April 5, 2010 (Leigh and Harding 2013, 70). The shortened video and its full-length, unedited counterpart, lasting some 39 minutes, were also made public on a website of their own (www.collateralmurder.com) as well as the video-sharing website YouTube. The footage caused outrage, and not least because of the two wounded children. There were the seemingly cold-blooded comments of the men on the helicopter (for instance, "Oh yeah, look at those dead bastards", "Well it's their fault for bringing their kids into a battle", and an amused, chuckling voice saying "I think they just drove over a body") as well as the fact that two of the men killed, Saeed Chmagh and Namir Noor-Eldeen, were employees of the international news agency Reuters (Leigh and Harding 2013, 66-67).¹

For WikiLeaks, the Apache video was the prelude to worldwide fame (or notoriety, depending on one's viewpoint) (Thorsen et al. 2013, 106). Although the organisation (discussed in more detail in

¹ However, according to Leigh and Harding, "Collateral Murder" did not cause as much of a stir as had been hoped. They attribute this partly to the fact that Reuters, who lost two employees in the events depicted in the video, chose not to confront the United States as they had already seen parts of the footage and subsequently changed their working methods on the field. Leigh and Harding further maintain that the choice of title was a setback for WikiLeaks and its editor and founder, Julian Assange, because "[r]eaders and viewers often hate the feeling they are bulldozed into a particular point of view" and because the events depicted in the video are not as black-and-white as the title suggests (2013, 70-71).

chapter 2.2) had been operational since 2006 and had been stirring the waters with many leaks of classified material (e.g. the operating procedures of the US army detention camp in Guantánamo Bay, Cuba, the contents of a private email account of then vice presidential candidate Sarah Palin, and hundreds of thousands of pager messages sent on September 11th, 2001), “Collateral Murder” was in a league of its own. Furthermore, at the time of its release, there were only a few people in the entire world who knew it was a test-piece for much greater revelations for Julian Assange, the editor and founder of WikiLeaks. It was merely the first disclosure of a stupendous cavalcade of leaked US military and government documents, obtained from two classified government databases and published by WikiLeaks and its mainstream media partners. The revelations started with the Afghan War Logs on July 26th, 2010, followed by the Iraq War Logs on October 22nd and, finally, the Diplomatic Cables on November 28th.

Although the centre stage in facilitating the publication of all these classified documents was reserved to WikiLeaks, the publication itself would not have been possible without someone leaking them to WikiLeaks in the first place. Thus, while “Collateral Murder” was having its premiere in Washington, there was a scrawny young man at Contingency Operating Station Hammer in Iraq, fidgeting over what was to happen next, both to him and to the thousands upon thousands of documents he had forwarded to Assange. When the Afghan War Logs were made public in late July, said young man was already in custody in a military jail at Camp Arifjan in Kuwait and had been charged with leaking classified information. When the Iraq War Logs were made public, he had been shipped back to the United States and was confined to a solitary cell in Quantico Marine Base in Virginia, where he remained through the publication of the Diplomatic Cables. It was not until June 3rd, 2013, over three years after his initial capture in Iraq, that the court martial of whistleblower Bradley Manning began. On August 21st the same year he was sentenced to 35 years in prison. The following day Bradley Manning issued a statement declaring that he is a woman living in the body of a man and henceforth wanted to be referred to as “she” and called by the name Chelsea Manning (“Bradley Manning – timeline”; “Timeline of Events”; Leigh and Harding 2013, 20, 88, 266-277).²

Although the leak she facilitated was at the time the biggest in the history of the United States, the importance of Chelsea Manning lies not only in the documents she passed to WikiLeaks. The fact that she was caught, charged, and tried in a court martial also has a bearing on future

² For the remainder of this thesis, I will use the name Chelsea Manning and feminine pronouns when referring to Manning. However, most of the sources I use as well as most of my primary study material refer to her with the name Bradley and masculine pronouns. I trust that because this variation in names and pronouns is restricted to one person, who also happens to be the focus of this study, it will not cause any undue confusion.

whistleblowers. Being charged with “aiding the enemy” on the grounds that some of the documents she gave to WikiLeaks and WikiLeaks made public were found on Osama bin Laden’s computer seems quite far-fetched and could easily be seen as an attack against the media’s right to publish information of public value. Although Manning was not found guilty of this particular charge, the use of the Espionage Act has significant repercussions for the future. The 35-year prison sentence she did receive was, in equal parts, a punishment for the crimes of which she was deemed guilty and a deterrent against future whistleblowers. This directly affects journalism, where the use of anonymous sources and the publication of leaked information are common practices. The possibility of a decades-long prison sentence acts strongly in favour of those wishing to keep classified information out of the public sphere, and Chelsea Manning was the first whistleblower to be sentenced in this scale in US history. As will be shown in chapter 2.4, during the term of the current president of the United States, Barack Obama, more whistleblowers have been prosecuted under the Espionage Act than under all the previous presidents combined. From its inception in 1917 to the present day, there have been twelve criminal indictments under said act for unauthorised disclosure of classified information. Nine of these have taken place during the Obama presidency (Snyder 2014). Furthermore, Ungar maintains that the government’s objective has not been so much to win lawsuits as to intimidate and suppress potential leakers (2011, 37).

On the other hand, 35 years in prison does seem a harsh punishment for making public documents that did not reveal much that was not already suspected or (at least unofficially) known. No one has been able to show that any people have been harmed because of the leak or that it has caused the United States much more than embarrassment (Beckett and Ball 2012, 71). According to Ungar, the underlying problem is “that the obsessive over-classification of US official information has reached a point where it is impossible to know with confidence what truly deserves to be kept secret and how that can be done effectively” (2011, 35). The amount of classified documents awaiting evaluation before possible release was, in 2009, in the hundreds of millions, not including emails from the Clinton and Bush administrations (Ungar 2011, 36). Thus, the fate of Chelsea Manning also has a bearing on the battle fought over the issue of classifying information. In simplistic terms, one might say that the starting point for the media would be that all information should basically be public, making any kind of classification an extreme case. Meanwhile, the government of the United States seems to maintain the exact opposite: that classification is the due course of things and that the public is told only what is absolutely necessary. In short, Manning is part of a bigger puzzle to do with the classification (or overclassification) of government documents in the US, as well as the government’s keen interest to stop unauthorized publication and leaking.

As far as academic interest goes, while WikiLeaks has garnered a sizeable amount of academic studies, the role of Chelsea Manning in the equation has been somewhat overlooked. Furthermore, the framing of whistleblowers in the media seems to be a surprisingly little research topic in general, especially considering how much the media rely on whistleblowers to receive information. In all, as will be demonstrated in chapter 4.1, I found only a handful of studies discussing the framing of whistleblowers, only one of which concentrates on Manning.

Because of this seeming dearth of research on the subject, instead of the more prominent phenomenon of WikiLeaks and the documents it has released, I will concentrate in this thesis on the person who provided those documents to the website. My purpose is to examine how Manning has been framed in opinion articles on the Internet page of Al Jazeera English. In addition to how Manning herself is portrayed in the articles, I am also interested in the wider context in which she is taken up. This is because when reading through these articles, I noticed that she was rarely the central subject. Instead, she was more often presented as a symptom of some larger entity, such as the double standards of the US government towards leakers and leaking, or the supposed moral corruptness of the state (explained and discussed in more detail in chapters 5.2 to 5.6).

Before delving into analysis, I will briefly outline some major points in the history of whistleblowing in the United States, as well as introduce the source of my primary material, Al Jazeera English, and my method of study, frame analysis.

2 Unnamed Sources, Leakers, and Whistleblowers

Unnamed sources have always been a staple in journalism. As Ramonet points out, leaked documents constitute a significant part of the information used by media in their news production (2012, 79). There are several reasons for the use of anonymous sources, the primary of which is that some information cannot be obtained without ensuring the anonymity of the person providing it (Carlson 2011, 2; Sanders 2003, 111). Since one of the primary functions of media is keeping governments and corporations accountable (Schlosberg 2013, 3), publishing information that has been labelled classified against the interests of the public works towards that accountability. After

all, illegally obtained information cannot be used in a court of law, but public opinion is not liable to condemn the press for publishing it (Ramonet 2012, 79).³

However, using anonymous sources is not without its pitfalls. Although a lot of information would quite likely never be uncovered without the help of a source wishing to remain unnamed, the downsides of anonymity for journalists, media, readers and viewers, and for journalism as a whole are too great to be disregarded. What emerges from the use of unnamed sources is, in Carlson's words, "a set of extremes as unnamed sources contribute to journalism's greatest triumphs and its most shameful episodes" (2011, 2). On the one hand, there is Deep Throat, probably the most famous unnamed source in the history of journalism, without whom Carl Bernstein and Bob Woodward of *The Washington Post* might never have uncovered the involvement of the White House in the Watergate break-in, a debacle that eventually led to the resignation of President Richard Nixon.⁴ On the other, there is another *Washington Post* reporter, Janet Cooke, and her tale of a child heroin addict. The story, which earned her a Pulitzer Prize, relied heavily on unnamed sources and, in the end, turned out to be a figment of her imagination (Smith 2008, 173). Thus, the most significant downside of using anonymous sources is the loss of accountability and transparency. When the source remains unknown, the journalist is responsible for the accuracy of the information and the motives for its publication (Carlson 2011, 2). Furthermore, as Bok points out, secrecy feeds on secrecy. As governments expand theirs, more people come within its bounds, creating opportunities for the leaking of secrets. Increased leaking usually leads to governments intensifying their efforts to keep secrets under locks, further expanding secrecy (quoted in Sanders 2003, 114). A vicious cycle is created.

Also, a point to bear in mind is the motives anonymous sources have for wanting to hand out information. For instance, high-level officials leaking information may do so to discreetly further certain policy options, to cover their own backs in case something goes wrong, or to demonstrate their disagreement with a decision (Smith 2008, 176-177). There is also the possibility that official sources wishing to remain anonymous are merely acting on orders from their superiors in the administration. This seems to be the case with *The New York Times* and the planning and early days of the US invasion of Iraq in 2002-2003. During that time, the newspaper reported in depth that Iraq had weapons of mass destruction at its disposal, a claim that subsequently turned out to be false.

³ In fact, in the United States, news organisations view anonymous sources as such an integral part of journalistic work that they have sought shield laws to protect journalists from having to identify sources. According to Smith, some half of the states have shield laws of varying effectiveness, and even in those states without them, judges have applied other laws to provide journalists with some protection (2008, 184).

⁴ In 2005, over three decades after the Watergate Scandal, the man behind Deep Throat was revealed to be Mark Felt, a former FBI agent. He died in 2008 ("A Guardian guide to US government whistleblowers", 2013).

The paper based many of its stories on anonymous sources who turned out to be government officials and Iraqi exiles friendly to the Bush administration. When substantiating these anonymous comments, administration officials were eager to confirm the information. After no such weapons were discovered, *The New York Times* was forced to admit that it may have been used by the Bush administration to justify going to war (Smith 2008, 176-177).⁵

Thus, the spectrum of unnamed sources runs from “authorised disclosures (planted items devoid of attribution)” to “uncontrolled revelations (whistle-blowers taking risks)” (Carlson 2011, 8). And here lies the basic difference between leakers and whistleblowers. The term *whistleblower* was coined by Ralph Nader, a US political activist, in 1971, and is typically understood as an “activity of calling attention to wrongdoing” (Thorsen et al. 2013, 102). A whistleblower, by definition, is an insider in an organisation or administration, disclosing information to the media to expose some kind of wrongdoing or abuse, often after other channels have proved to be ineffective. He or she acts knowingly and voluntarily, not under oath or duress. Whistleblowing is a distinct form of leaking in that it is done for idealistic, moral, or ethical motives (Sanders 2003, 113; Carlson 2011, 10; Vanderkerckhove 2006, 22; Thorsen et al. 2013, 102-103). As opposed to leakers, who publish information that may endanger for example soldiers, intelligence workers, or national security, whistleblowers are motivated by public interest to reveal wrongdoings (Chapa 2013a, 19). According to Thorsen et al., whistleblowers are usually portrayed in a positive light, as people who reveal information reluctantly and as a last resort to expose misconduct or malpractice (2013, 102-103). Ultimately, the entire definition of whistleblowing is based on the assumption that it is rightful. As Patomäki points out, a basic tenet of democracy is that matters with public interest value should be known to the public. Ideally, documents would be classified only in extremely limited situations, and those doing the classifying would be morally and legally responsible for the secrecy. Thus, classifying documents on the wrong grounds would be against the norms of democratic publicity. Since only the leaking of rightfully classified documents would be wrong, whistleblowing in the sense of leaking information with public interest value would be a legitimate way to strengthen democratic publicity (Patomäki 2013, 130-131). It could also be seen to help maintain the watchdog function of media over corporations and governments, and, according to Mazumdar, some even see recent cases of whistleblowing as traditional media’s failure to perform this function properly (2013, 200).

⁵ For more on the controversial status of unnamed sources, see Carlton (2011).

However, the phenomenon of whistleblowing with all its nuances is too wide a subject to be thoroughly discussed here. Since this thesis will concentrate on Chelsea Manning, who leaked classified US military reports on the Iraq and Afghan Wars as well as diplomatic cables from US officials around the world, what follows below is a short historical introduction into leaking classified government information in the United States.

2.1 Daniel Ellsberg and the Pentagon Papers

The use of anonymous sources has always been fairly common in the US, especially among more elite news outlets and their reporting on national affairs, in spite of news organisations' internal guidelines and external criticism discouraging their use. Since the days of George Washington's presidency and the establishment of federal government in the United States in the late 18th century, unnamed officials have leaked classified information to the press (Carlson 2011, 6-7). Also, as long as there have been leakers, there have been schisms between governments' penchant for secrecy and news organisations' search for exposés. This has often resulted in governments hunting down leakers. For instance during the 1800s, Congress investigated hundreds of leak cases, leading to public debate about the purposes of anonymity, although during that time, reporters usually grudgingly cooperated with investigations without utilising freedom of the press to avoid testifying (ibid.). Furthermore, according to Carlson, at the beginning of the 20th century, during Theodore Roosevelt's presidency, the White House began to manipulate the news by making anonymous authorised leaks, a practice still employed today. At the same time, searches were conducted to uncover unauthorised leaks (Carlson 2011, 7-8). The first truly major case of unauthorised whistleblowing, however, did not take place until the summer of 1971, when *The New York Times* began publishing a series of articles based on a secret history of the Vietnam War.

History of U.S. Decision Making Process on Vietnam Policy, in common parlance known as the Pentagon Papers, consisted of forty-seven volumes, 7,000 pages, and traced US involvement in Vietnam from the years of the Second World War to the late 1960s and the then on-going Vietnam War (Rudenstine 1996, 2, 27-28). The commissioner of this top secret study, Secretary of Defence Robert S. McNamara, hoped that a detailed historical analysis would explain why the United States was engaged in a war on the other side of the globe and why US policies in Vietnam had failed, as well as help justify changes in said policies (Rudenstine 1996, 19).

The person who handed the study to *The New York Times*, Daniel Ellsberg, was a true insider. He worked as a strategic analyst for the RAND Corporation, an independent think tank originally established to analyse and research policy options for the United States Air Forces, where he was involved in, among other things, hatching plans for nuclear war against the Soviet Union and other communist states and devising strategies for the Vietnam War (Rudenstine 1996, 34-35; *The Most Dangerous Man in America*). What prompted his transformation from a pro-government hawk into a firm opposer of the war and gave him the first nudge towards becoming a whistleblower was his decision to volunteer for the Vietnam War. Experiencing the war first-hand profoundly affected Ellsberg's thinking. He entered Vietnam thinking the war was morally justified and necessary; by 1967, when he returned to the US, he was disillusioned by its futility and the US government's unwillingness to change its approach. In short, he was of the opinion that the United States should get out of Vietnam (Rudenstine 1996, 36-37).

As an employee of the RAND Corporation, Ellsberg had been given clearances beyond top secret, gaining access to material as highly classified as the Pentagon Papers (Rudenstine 1996, 34-35). After seeing the disillusioning reality of the Vietnam War, the content of the study shocked him into action. What he learned from the Papers was that several presidents and governments had lied to the people about the history of and motivations for the war as well as about their own behind-the-scenes actions. He discovered, for instance, that President Truman had financed the French to retake Vietnam, their former colony, even though he knew they were fighting a national movement that had the support of the Vietnamese people; that President Eisenhower had publically supported democracy in Vietnam while secretly opposing and even cancelling free elections because of worries about who would be elected; and that President Johnson had continued lying to the American people because, like those who came before him, he did not want Vietnam to be lost to the communists during his watch (*The Most Dangerous Man in America*). Ellsberg felt guilty for his role as a military tactics advisor during the early years of the war and wanted to do what he could to help end it. As he stated in the documentary *The Most Dangerous Man in America*, what bothered him "wasn't that we were on the wrong side; we were the wrong side". He decided to make the Pentagon Papers public.

After weeks of secretly photocopying the Papers with the help of another Vietnam veteran and RAND employee, Anthony Russo, Ellsberg had duplicates of the documents. He tried to ask several members of the Congress, e.g. Senators J. William Fulbright, George McGovern, and Charles Mathias, as well as Representative Paul N. McCloskey, to release the documents, but all refused. Finally, in February of 1971, he started to seriously consider following the advice of a number of

political leaders, including McGovern, and hand the study straight to the press (Rudenstine 1996, 42-46). He picked Neil Sheehan of *The New York Times*, to whom he had already leaked information about a secret CIA report concerning enemy troop strength in Vietnam (*The Most Dangerous Man in America*).⁶ After thoroughly considering the likely outcomes of the publication, the *Times* editors agreed that the documents warranted publication at least as far as they demonstrated how the government had deceived the American people about the reasons for American involvement in the Vietnam War (Rudenstine 1996, 55). *The New York Times* started publishing their stories based on the leaked study on 13th June, 1971, with *The Washington Post* following suit a few days later.

At the time of its publication, *The New York Times*' Pentagon Papers revelations were "the single largest unauthorized disclosure of classified documents in the history of the United States" (Rudenstine 1996, 2). This was not, however, the only singularity of the case. As Rudestine further points out, it was also the first time that the federal government sued the press on the grounds of national security and was granted a temporary restraining order (ibid.). Such a case had never appeared before any court of law in the United States, giving the court considerable leeway in their decision as well as making it a powerful precedent in the future (Rudenstine 1996, 4). When the court gave its verdict, it was in favour of *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post* and in line with the First Amendment of the Constitution and its protection of the press. However, the government did not lose the case because there was no threat to national security but because they were not able to satisfactorily prove that such an immediate and serious threat existed. The court made the decision between freer press and government censorship, and "decided to risk the dangers inherent in a freer press because the alternative resolution – enhancing government power to censor the press – was even more threatening to a stable and vital democracy" (Rudenstine 1996, 354-355).

In the end, the government did not manage to sentence even the whistleblower, Daniel Ellsberg. He was initially indicted under the Espionage Act (explained in more detail in chapter 2.3) for unauthorised possession and theft of government documents; later on, conspiracy and eight other counts were added, making the length of the maximum possible prison sentence 115 years (*The Most Dangerous Man in America*). What followed was a court case bungled by the administration's own overzealousness. It was revealed that two government employees had burgled the offices of Ellsberg's psychiatrist, hoping to find information useful for the prosecution; that the presiding judge had been discussing with President Nixon the possibility of becoming director of the Federal

⁶ Leaking the report on troop movements was the first time Ellsberg went outside official channels ("The Most Dangerous Man in America").

Bureau of Investigation (FBI); and that the FBI had been illegally wiretapping Ellsberg as far back as 1969, prior to any whistleblowing whatsoever had taken place (Rudenstine 1996, 342). In the end, the case against Ellsberg (and Russo, who was also charged) was declared a mistrial because the government had tainted its case to such a degree that a fair trial was impossible (*The Most Dangerous Man in America*).

The consequences of publishing the Pentagon Papers, however, were not as grand as could have been surmised from the court case it engendered. Ellsberg himself was disappointed that the publication did not have any seeming effect on the Vietnam War (*The Most Dangerous Man in America*). No clear public reaction was discernible, no demonstrations took place, and no coordinated public pressure was put on the Congress to cease the war's funding. There is also no evidence that the revelations did any lasting damage to the United States (Rudenstine 1996, 327-329). The outcome of the ordeal for the media, however, was immense. It provided them with an important legal precedent in their favour in case any government decided to pursue injunction in matters of national security. However, instead of the media, the government has turned its attention to other facilitators of whistleblowing and distributors of leaked information, such as the whistleblowing website WikiLeaks, as well as to the whistleblowers themselves.

2.2 WikiLeaks

It took almost 40 years to break the record set by the Pentagon Papers as the biggest leak in US history. In the latter half of 2010, with the continuous publication of news stories based on the Afghan and Iraq War Logs and the US Diplomatic Cables, WikiLeaks was probably one of the most talked about phenomenon in news media around the world. As the distributor of the leaked documents, it also proved to be the epitome of new kinds of interactive media as well as a challenge to traditional journalism.

According to its own website, WikiLeaks is “a not-for-profit media organisation” whose “goal is to bring important news and information to the public” (“What is WikiLeaks?”). Basically, it provides “a high security anonymous drop box fortified by cutting-edge cryptographic information technologies” (ibid.), i.e. an electronic drop box with encryption that is “sophisticated and effectively unbreakable” (Beckett and Ball 2012, 20). By using it, whistleblowers can pass on documents without anyone being able to ascertain where they came from and who leaked them. Nevertheless, although WikiLeaks may be the most famous whistleblowing site on the Internet, the

technology that it uses is not as novel as might have been construed from all the publicity. The oldest known leak site on the Internet, Cryptome, was established already in 1996, and still takes open admissions and publishes documents, usually without redaction and editorials (Beckett and Ball 2012, 19). Others, such as OpenLeaks and BrusselsLeaks, have since followed, in addition to efforts made by media organisations, including *The New York Times* and *The Wall Street Journal* and Al Jazeera, to provide their own drop boxes (Benkler 2013, 27; Beckett and Ball 2012, 127-129).

However, instead of its technological characteristics, what truly matter are WikiLeaks' political and ideological underpinnings. Brevini et al. summarise the organisation succinctly in the following:

Rooted in hacktivism and in ethics of radical transparency, exploiting technological expertise and opportunities, and carrying the 'wiki' concept of open publishing and collaborative work in its name, WikiLeaks connects with both an alternative countercultural and a digital citizen media model. (2013, 4)

To sum up, it combines elements of a hacktivist network, a transparency organisation, a political sect, a stateless group, and an uncensorable outlet (Beckett and Ball 2012, 32). Fuchs' definition for WikiLeaks is that of a watchdog organisation that collects and publishes information about those in positions of power. In this way, it is a reaction to "asymmetrical economic, political and cultural power structures". By keeping an eye on the powerful and publishing information about them, watchdogs such as WikiLeaks are working towards limiting and possibly even abolishing such asymmetric power (Fuchs 2014, 217-218).

This is what WikiLeaks has endeavoured to do since its establishment in 2006. In addition to what was mentioned in the introduction above (see 1), it has published documents as varied as the secret doctrines of Scientology, American university fraternity manuals, the membership lists of the right wing British National Party, a report about Kenyan policemen doing assassinations for money, email addresses of WikiLeaks donors, and a list of major debtors of Icelandic bank Kaupthing, to name but a few (Domscheit-Berg 2011, 279-281). In 2008, it also rattled sabres with Swiss private bank Julius Baer by publishing documents about its arranging tax schemes for some major clients in the Cayman Islands, a well-known tax haven. In retaliation, the bank attempted to have WikiLeaks' Internet domain name removed, but this only led to the website's direct IP address being circulated in web forums and blogs, making it more widely known and bringing the organisation some of the fame it craved. Within a month, Julius Baer dropped its charges, a move which was interpreted as a victory for WikiLeaks in its fight for transparency (Beckett and Ball 2012, 23).

For better or worse, WikiLeaks is also closely tied to the persona of its founder, Julian Assange (Beckett and Ball 2012, 143). With his white hair, scruffy appearance, and oddball behaviour of continually moving around, dragging his belongings with him, and sleeping on other people's sofas, the Australian former hacker is a difficult man to define. Over the years, he has managed to gain a number of devote fans and supporters as well as an equal, if not greater, amount of opponents and enemies. The main watershed for Assange, however, was his trip to Sweden in August 2010. During his time there, he had sex with two women who later made allegations of rape, molestation, and coercion against him (Grierson 2015; Miller 2015). Assange himself initially described the accusations as a honey trap set up for him by the Pentagon, but was later forced to admit there was no evidence to back up this claim (Leigh and Harding 2013, 159-160). No charges have been brought against him due to the fact the prosecutor has not been able to interrogate him (Grierson 2015). In June 2012, after losing his fight against extradition to Sweden, Assange entered the embassy of Ecuador in Knightsbridge, London, requesting political asylum, which was granted (Walker 2015). In August 2015, the Swedish authorities dropped the allegations on molestation and coercion because they had expired, but the rape allegations still stand (Grierson 2015). The latest twist in the case took place on October 12th, 2015, when London's Metropolitan police announced that although they still aim to arrest Assange, the permanent patrols that have been posted outside the embassy since his arrival will be withdrawn because they are "no longer proportionate" (Grierson 2015). However, the end result stays the same: Assange remains in the embassy, making occasional appearances through video links, and what truly took place in Sweden in August 2010 remains obscured.

Whatever one thinks of Assange as a person, it must be admitted that his views and attitudes have a major bearing on the inner workings of WikiLeaks. He thinks that transparency is a vehicle to gain justice. The more power a person, an institution, or an organisation has, the more transparent their activities should be to ensure that they are just (Beckett and Ball 2012, 145-146). In short, according to Beckett and Ball, Assange is not against any particular ideology or politics. What he wants to do with WikiLeaks is to disrupt the system that sustains those in positions of power; it is about unsettling the control of information that sustains the status quo (Beckett and Ball 2012, 30-31).

A matter that certainly helps WikiLeaks in its pursuit of transparency and accountability for the powerful is that, as Beckett and Ball put it, it is a legal revolution more than a technological one. WikiLeaks is not a legal entity in any one country, it does not have a home base, and it and its

supporters dwell in cyberspace, making it a stateless organisation.⁷ As Bennett and Ball further point out, “[c]onventional mass media’s whole relationship to power and its ethical framework is conditioned by the fact that they can be held to account by national and international regulations and laws” (2012, 23-24). Due to being stateless, these laws and regulations do not concern WikiLeaks, giving it “immunity from the consequences of the wider settlement between journalism and society” (Beckett and Ball 2012, 24). It can, for instance, publish information when traditional media cannot, as when *The Guardian* was enjoined from telling how oil giant Trafigura had been dumping toxic waste into the ocean off the Ivory Coast. WikiLeaks published the source material, thus making the injunction void (Beckett and Ball 2012, 38-39). In fact, this is another point in which WikiLeaks differs from mainstream media: it insists on publishing full source material on its website (Beckett and Ball 2012, 44). This way, according to Schlosberg, “publics no longer need to rely exclusively on the professional media to determine what *is* news, what is *important* news and what the news *means*” (2013, 146, emphasis in the original).

Despite occasionally making it into the news with some of the abovementioned leaks, WikiLeaks remained a marginal phenomenon up until the publication of the “Collateral Murder” video (see 1). It had its hands on the biggest leak of classified material in the history of the United States so far, provided by Chelsea Manning (discussed in 2.3 below), which proved problematic for a minor alternative media organisation with a limited workforce. From this point of view, the reasons for WikiLeaks’ cooperation with mainstream media in the publication of the Afghan and Iraq War Logs and the Embassy Cables are easy to understand: it wanted a wider audience for the revelations, and it needed help with processing the raw data (Beckett and Ball 2012, 48). Assange was clever in giving *The Guardian*, *The New York Times*, and *Der Spiegel* enough exclusivity in their respective national markets to bring in economic benefits, but also made sure that because of international competition no one could bury the story (Benkler 2013, 14).⁸ Simultaneous publication by the three papers also meant that anyone wanting to prevent it or censor the content would have to work within three separate jurisdictions, and WikiLeaks itself would still publish the original documents (Beckett and Ball 2012, 53). As the publication of the leaked documents

⁷ One example of the stateless existence of WikiLeaks in cyberspace is the chain of virtual protests it incited after coming under attack because of the war log and embassy cable leaks. Hackers from all around the world showed their support by spreading the contents of the website further, by mirroring the site and thus making it impossible to remove it from the Internet, and by attacking websites of companies that had taken action against WikiLeaks (such as PayPal, Visa, MasterCard, and Amazon, who all terminated their services to WikiLeaks) (Milan 2013, 193).

⁸ In Benkler’s view, WikiLeaks is needed precisely because leaking to one source might lead to the information never being published or the publication being significantly delayed. Organisations such as WikiLeaks make sure that the information is distributed to multiple publishers to ensure publication, in which case the whistleblowers’ personal risk has not been in vain (Benkler 2013, 27).

continued, the number of partners also expanded: eventually, over 80 news organisations around the world had access to at least parts of the diplomatic cables (Beckett and Ball 2012, 67).⁹

WikiLeaks' cooperation with established media turned out to be difficult to manage. Part of this surely had to do with Julian Assange's flamboyant personality, but some of the difficulties can be attributed to the cultural divide between the values and working methods of traditional media and a radical watchdog organisation such as WikiLeaks (Benkler 2013, 20). However, the cooperation is also an example of the interplay between new and traditional media and their ways of using and benefitting from each other. At the same time, new media and the "democratization of access to information" that they bring with them is challenging traditional media's function as a gatekeeper to that information (Hopeton 2013, 85).

This democratised access to information that WikiLeaks has been a part of is also one of the main reasons why it has been criticised. It published the Afghan War Logs without too many redactions, thus making it theoretically possible for people to be identified from the entries. With the Iraq War Logs, it received help in redacting, making the identification of people more difficult. With the Embassy Cables, information was initially only published through news stories in various media. However, in the end WikiLeaks did what it had always promised to do and published all the cables in full and without redactions. This caused considerable outcry from the media for not following the same code of ethics as them in preventing any possible harm that might come to people because of the leaks. One of the fears is that because new media, such as WikiLeaks, do not share journalism's ethical discourse, governments will become more aggressive in policing and regulating media disclosures (Shepard 2011, 100).¹⁰ However, according to Beckett and Ball "[i]n reality there has been little, if any, evidence that the leaks did direct harm to individuals, though it is debatable how, or whether, we would ever know if someone had suffered" (2012, 71). Not being aware of any damage does not mean that no damage has been done. Curiously, WikiLeaks has also been accused of hypocrisy: it has been described as a transparency organisation without transparency because of secrecy surrounding its staff and the mysterious ways in which it operates (Beckett and Ball 2012, 82).

⁹ It is not within the scope of this study to delve into the content of the leaks in any detail. A thorough picture of what the War Logs and Embassy Cables are about can be found for instance in the articles written by WikiLeaks' mainstream media partners on the matter.

¹⁰ Perhaps it is this expectation of certain norms being used that is behind the US government attacking Assange and Manning over the leaks, sometimes viciously, whereas the news organisations that collaborated with WikiLeaks received little criticism (Thorsen et al. 2013, 109).

After the furore following publication of the Embassy Cables subsided, WikiLeaks has rarely made major headlines. However, publishing has not ceased. Over the past five years, WikiLeaks has made available, among others, the following documents: classified Guantánamo prisoner dossiers; several sets of Spy Files detailing particulars of digital mass surveillance in several countries; over five million emails from intelligence corporation Stratfor; over two million emails from Syrian political figures, ministries, and corporations; US Department of Defence detainee policies; information on the negligent maintenance of UK's Trident nuclear weapons submarines; several portions of the Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement; over half a million cables and other documents from the Foreign Ministry of Saudi Arabia; and information on the NSA's tapping of 29 key Brazilian government phone numbers, including that of President Dilma Rousseff (*WikiLeaks*). Some of these made headlines in news media around the world, some remained largely under the radar. On the other hand, as will be shown below, there were other whistleblowers that did not utilize WikiLeaks as a middleman but talked directly to journalists. However, before moving on to other recent cases of whistleblowing in the US, it is apt to have a closer look on the person who gave WikiLeaks its big scoops.

2.3 Chelsea Manning

The major leaks facilitated by WikiLeaks would obviously not have been possible without a leaker, that leaker being Chelsea Manning. She was born as Bradley Manning on December 17th, 1987, in the small town of Crescent in Oklahoma. From a young age, she was a bit of a geek: tech-savvy and interested in computers (Leigh and Harding 2013, 22, 27). She never truly felt she fit in the mould society was offering for her, in her own words because of being more intelligent than average and effeminate in her manners (Manning 2011). She volunteered for the US Army because she wanted to go to college, and the GI Bill would fund it. She enlisted in October 2007, and because of her computer skills she was sent to Iraq as an intelligence analyst with the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division. Leigh and Harding speculate that army, with its emphasis of physicality and masculinity, cannot have been easy for a person as small in stature as Manning. Being gay must have made it even harder due to the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy, according to which homosexuals could only serve in the military if they kept their sexual orientation a secret. The realisation that she was suffering from gender dysphoria complicated matters even further (Leigh and Harding 2013, 20, 25-27). In short, she found it hard to fit in.

As an intelligence analyst, Manning had access to two major networks containing classified military and government documents: SIPRNet (the Secret Internet Protocol Router Network), used by the State Department and the Department of Defence to share information, and JWICS (the Joint Worldwide Intelligence Communications System), used for sending top-secret dispatches globally (Leigh and Harding 2013, 21). Security around these networks was negligent and no one seemed to care, making misuse easy (ibid.; Manning 2011). Furthermore, unlike with Daniel Ellsberg (see 2.1 above), Edward Snowden (see 2.5), and numerous other government leakers during recent years (see 2.4), the access that Chelsea Manning had was not due to her high level of security clearance or any special sensitivity of her job. It had more to do with the terrorist attacks against the United States on September 11th, 2001, and the fact that shortcomings in intelligence sharing between government bodies hampered efforts to prevent them. What ensued was a decision made by the US government to widen its personnel's access to classified military information. As a result, millions of military and civilian personnel and external contractors had access to at least some classified material through the networks (Bennett and Ball 2012, 49; McCurdy 2013, 134). Manning happened to be one of them. The sort of excessive classification of information discussed in the introduction, coupled with wide access, certainly helped Manning in leaking.

However, what truly made her a whistleblower were the actions of the US forces in Iraq, reports of which she was able to read on the networks. Little by little, they started to grate on her sense of morals: she felt she was actively part of something she was personally, morally, and ethically opposed to (Leigh and Harding 2013, 30-31). This can be seen from the chat logs of Manning's online conversations with hacker Adrian Lamo, for instance in the following excerpts (Manning 2011):

i dont believe in good guys versus bad guys anymore... i only a plethora of states acting in self interest... with varying ethics and moral standards of course, but self-interest nonetheless

i had always questioned the things worked, and investigated to find the truth... but that was a point where i was a *part* of something... i was actively involved in something that i was completely against...

i cant separate myself from others ... i feel connected to everybody... like they were distant family

we're human... and we're killing ourselves... and no-one seems to see that... and it bothers me

Her apprehensions and aversions can be seen in definite form in the following incident she describes in the logs (Manning 2011):

was watching 15 detainees taken by the Iraqi Federal Police... for printing “anti-Iraqi literature”... the Iraqi federal police wouldn’t cooperate with US forces, so i was instructed to investigate the matter, find out who the “bad guys” were, and how significant this was for the FPs... it turned out, they had printed a scholarly critique against PM Maliki... i had an interpreter read it for me... and when i found out that it was a benign political critique titled “Where did the money go?” and following the corruption trail within the PM’s cabinet... i immediately took that information and *ran* to the officer to explain what was going on... he didn’t want to hear any of it... he told me to shut up and explain how we could assist the FPs in finding *MORE* detainees...

Apart from the chat logs, little is actually known about what Manning truly thinks and believes. This is why Leigh and Harding describe them in the following manner: “[t]he statements this tormented 22-year-old made about what was at the time the biggest leak in US official history – some intimate, some desperate, some intelligent and principled – served, in the end, as Bradley Manning’s own testament. They make it clear that he was not a thief, not venal, not mad, and not a traitor. He believed that, somehow, he was doing a good thing” (2013, 77). Until a time when she can freely speak for herself, the chat logs remain the only way to sneak a peek inside her mind.

Finally her conscience would not allow her to stay silent any longer. She decided to contact WikiLeaks after it had published over 500,000 pager messages intercepted on 9/11. She knew that the messages must have come from a National Security Agency (NSA) database, that someone must have leaked them to WikiLeaks, and that the identity of that someone had not been revealed, indicating that her own identity would also be kept a secret (Leigh and Harding 2013, 31). She handed over to WikiLeaks 91,731 documents and field reports from the Afghan War (covering a period of six years from the war’s beginning), 391,832 documents from the Iraq War (dated between 1st January, 2004, and 31st December, 2009), and 251,832 diplomatic cables from 274 US embassies around the world, which WikiLeaks made public with its mainstream media partners (Thorsen et al 2013, 107), as described above in chapter 2.2.

Around the time of sending the information to WikiLeaks, Manning also started chatting online with Lamo, mainly because she had no one else to talk to and because she wanted to unburden herself about what she had done and about the confusion she felt over her sexuality (Manning 2011; Leigh and Harding 2013, 76). It was Lamo who eventually turned Manning in to the US military, saying he did it because he felt it was his patriotic duty and because he thought the leaks might have endangered lives (Leigh and Harding 2013, 81; Thorsen et al. 2013, 108). Manning was arrested in Iraq, flown first to a military jail in Kuwait and then to Quantico Marine Corps Base in Virginia, US, where her subsequent treatment raised some outrage in the media (Leigh and Harding 2013, 88, 276-8). Finally on 30th July, 2013, she was sentenced to 35 years in prison. Although the most

serious charge, aiding the enemy, was dropped, she was “found guilty in their entirety of 17 out of the 22 counts against him, and of an amended version of four others” (Pilkington 2013). Perhaps most importantly, she was found guilty of seven counts under the Espionage Act (*ibid.*), which, as will be seen below, has become the go-to charge for whistleblowers in the United States in recent years.

2.4 President Obama and the Espionage Act

During recent years, the Espionage Act of 1917 has become a highly controversial piece of legislation. Its original purpose, as the name suggests, was quite clear: it was passed to prosecute people spying for foreign enemies (Downey 2013). However, in addition to actual espionage, it also encompasses any unauthorised distribution of classified government information. All in all, before 2009, US government officials had been charged three times under the Espionage Act for giving classified information to the press (Chapa 2013a, 17; Downey 2013). The first of these cases took place in 1973, when the act was first used against an alleged leaker, Daniel Ellsberg (see 2.1). The second case took place in 1985 (during Ronald Reagan’s residency), when an American intelligence professional Samuel Morison was sentenced to two years in prison for giving satellite images of a Soviet ship-building facility to a defence newsletter. The third case took place in 2005 (during George W. Bush’s presidency), when a Department of Defence employee Lawrence Franklin pleaded guilty to giving information about US policy towards Iran to the American Israeli Public Affairs Committee, who forwarded it to Israel. He was sentenced to nearly 13 years in prison, a sentence that was later reduced to a 10-month house arrest (Shell and Dennis 2013; Snyder 2014). Since then, at least six government employees and three contractors have been prosecuted under the Espionage Act, with more criminal investigations possibly under way (Downey 2013). As Snyder points out, it would seem that leaks have become the act’s “focus of enforcement” (2014).

The root cause for this abundance of Espionage Act charges can be traced back to 9/11. Initially, after the terrorist attacks in New York and Washington D.C., journalists found it easy to obtain information about war plans and preparations. Everything gradually changed when the media began making embarrassing revelations about US actions in home and abroad: stories, all at least partly based on leaks, about Iraq’s imaginary weapons of mass destruction, the abuse of prisoners in Abu Ghraib, the aggressive interrogation of suspected terrorists in “black sites” outside the US, a botched-up operation to disrupt Iran’s aspirations to build a nuclear bomb, and the interception of Americans’ phone calls without warrants. The abundance and unruliness of the leaks angered then

President George W. Bush, kick-starting the first leak investigations, which Obama eventually inherited from his predecessor (Downey 2013).

The investigations and prosecutions of potential leakers finally became so numerous and so forceful that *The New York Times* noted in a cover story in the summer of 2010 that the Obama administration was much more aggressive in their endeavours to punish unauthorised leaks than any of its predecessors (Shepard 2011, 80). When running for president, Obama promised to make his administration more open and transparent than its predecessors, but there have been little signs that anything is being done to fulfil that promise. Downey says that “with some exceptions, such as putting the White House visitors’ logs on the whitehouse.gov website and selected declassified documents on the new U.S. Intelligence Community website, it [the Obama administration] discloses too little of the information most needed by the press and public to hold the administration accountable for its policies” (2013). However, despite minor improvements such as classifying fewer documents and expediting the declassification process, the current government is still considered to be the most hostile and the least easily approachable for journalists in US history (Downey 2013). The uncommonly high number of whistleblowers charged under the Espionage Act is but one indication of it. Furthermore, Ungar maintains that the objective of these recent legal actions is not to win lawsuits but to intimidate and thus suppress potential future leakers (2011, 37).

What follows below is a brief overview of seven out of the nine recent Espionage Act cases concerning the leaking of classified government information to the media. The case of Chelsea Manning was already discussed above (see chapters 1 and 2.3), whereas Edward Snowden’s revelations will be explored in chapter 2.5 below. Although there have surely been numerous other leakers during Obama’s presidency, both authorised and unauthorised ones, I will here concentrate on the ones that have been prosecuted under the Espionage Act for leaking information to the press.

Shamai Leibowitz. FBI translator Shamai Leibowitz handed five documents, secret FBI transcripts of conversations recorded at the Israeli Embassy, to a blogger because in his opinion they revealed law-breaking and because he feared Israel would strike nuclear facilities in Iran. He admitted to disclosing classified information about the intelligence activities of the United States and was sentenced to 20 months in prison. The identity of the blogger and the nature of the leaked information have not been disclosed; even the presiding judge never saw the content of the documents (Chapa 2013b, 18; Naureckas 2011, 14; “A Guardian guide to US government whistleblowers”, 2013; Downey 2013).

Stephen Kim. An arms expert working as a contractor for the State Department, Stephen Kim received a 13-month prison sentence under the Espionage Act for leaking classified information about North Korea's nuclear weapons. In 2009, he gave details of how North Korea was planning to "escalate its nuclear program and conduct another nuclear test" to Fox News reporter James Rosen (Downey 2013). Rosen's report speculated on how North Korea would respond to the US criticising its endeavours to build nuclear weapons. Kim stated that he leaked the information because he thought the American people should know what kind of a threat they were facing (Chapa 2013b, 18; Naureckas 2011, 14; Ackerman and Pilkington 2015).

Thomas Drake. NSA official Thomas Drake was charged under the Espionage Act for leaking information about Trailblazer, NSA's domestic surveillance programme, to Siobhan Gorman, a reporter of the *Baltimore Sun*. The reason for the leak was Drake's critical stance on spending and management at the NSA and his disappointment with the agency's decision to reject another programme in favour of the much more expensive Trailblazer. The rejected programme also had additional safeguards for Americans, which Trailblazer lacked. Drake pleaded guilty to exceeding his authorised use of an NSA computer, and was sentenced to 240 hours of community service and one year's probation. Thus, he was charged for taking classified material home, not for leaking it, and all charges under the Espionage Act (which could have led to 35 years in prison) were dropped (Chapa 2013b, 18; "A Guardian guide to US government whistleblowers", 2013; "The future of government whistleblowers", 2011; Downey 2013).

Jeffrey Sterling. CIA officer Jeffrey Sterling received a three-and-a-half year prison sentence for leaking *New York Times* reporter James Risen information about a plan to disrupt Iran's mission to gain a nuclear weapon. The plan involved passing on flawed nuclear-weapon blueprints to Iran via a Russian intermediary in the hopes the Iranians would waste years trying to develop working parts using them. The operation, put to action in the late 1990s, was botched and may actually have aided Iran in its efforts to build a nuclear bomb. Risen published the information in his 2006 book *State of War*. He was also subpoenaed to testify against Sterling but refused to reveal his source. Instead of a meagre 42 months in prison, Sterling could have received a sentence of over 20 years, but the presiding judge thought it would be excessive considering that former CIA director and army general David Petraeus had just been given a sizeable fine and probation for handing classified military information to his autobiographer and mistress, Paula Broadwell. The reason Sterling got even 42 months was because he did not plead guilty (Chapa 2013b, 18; Naureckas 2011, 14; "The future of government leakers", 2011; "Former CIA man Jeffrey Sterling gets 42 months in prison over Iran leaks", 2015; Ackerman and Pilkington 2015).

James Hitselberger. Navy contract linguist James Hitselberger was charged under the Espionage Act for printing out secret documents from a classified computer system and attempting to remove them from a secure work area at a military base in Bahrain. At that time, he was working as an Arabic translator for the United States Fifth Fleet. His original charges also included one for sending classified documents to a public archive at Stanford University's Hoover Institution. He eventually pleaded guilty to a misdemeanour charge of taking classified documents without authorisation, for which the maximum possible penalty is one year in prison and a 100,000-dollar fine, minus what time had already been served. All charges under the Espionage Act were dropped (Gerstein 2014; Shell and Dennis 2013; Snyder 2014).

John Kiriakou. CIA officer John Kiriakou was sentenced to two and a half years in prison for discussing CIA's use of waterboarding as an interrogation technique in an ABC television interview in 2007. He also admitted to giving a reporter the names of two undercover agents involved in these interrogations. He pleaded guilty to a charge unrelated to the Espionage Act, and thus became the first CIA agent ever to be jailed for leaking information to the media. ("A Guardian guide to US government whistleblowers", 2013; Chapa 2013b, 18; Chapa 2013a, 17; Ackerman and Pilkington 2015; Downey 2013).

Donald Sachtleben. Bomb technician Donald J. Sachtleben, while working as a contractor for the FBI, leaked information to the Associated Press about a successful CIA operation in Yemen. According to the information, the CIA had penetrated a local Al Qaeda group and managed to get a hold of an "underwear bomb" that a terrorist would have detonated aboard a US-bound airplane. The AP story on the mission came out on 7th May, 2012. To identify Sachtleben, the government subpoenaed phone records for over 100 AP journalists, a deed which received wide criticism for its unwarranted extent (after all, only five reporters were involved in writing the story) and for the fact that the AP was not notified of the subpoena in advance, as is customary in the US. Sachtleben was sentenced to 45 months in prison for unlawfully disclosing national defence information, as well as receiving 97 months for an unrelated child pornography case (Downey 2013).

Another distinctive characteristic of these cases, in addition to the use of the Espionage Act, is that, as Ackerman and Pilkington point out, only the ones who lack political connections are properly charged and punished. They maintain that those with connections get a slap on the wrist, if even that, as can be deduced from the lightweight sentence of General David Petraeus, briefly mentioned above (Ackerman and Pilkington 2015). However, there is one whistleblower whom the US government has not managed, as yet, to bring in front of a judge.

2.5 Edward Snowden and the National Security Agency

When it comes to charges under the Espionage Act, the aforementioned men were small players compared to what was to come. When Chelsea Manning was already in prison waiting for a trial, another American whistleblower was gearing up for publication that would make most other leaks seem tiny in their scope. Unlike Manning, this time it was not a regular member of army personnel who, by chance and oversight more than anything else, had access to vast troves of classified document. Edward Snowden, who blew the whistle on the pervasive, global-scale electronic surveillance of the National Security Agency (NSA), worked as a technical expert for Booz Allen Hamilton, an NSA subcontractor, and had security clearances to information that made Manning's access pale in comparison.

In the media, the unravelling of the scope of NSA surveillance began when Snowden made contact first with documentarian Laura Poitras and later with journalist Glenn Greenwald. According to Greenwald, Snowden singled him out because he was keeping a political blog about the NSA and how it had been able to secretly expand its surveillance programme as a result of 9/11 and the war on terrorism; a subject on which he had also published a book (2014, 11-17). The massive scale of Snowden's revelations prompted Greenwald to ask for support from *The Guardian*, for whom he was working at the time. They agreed to run with the story, and the first articles based on the leaks were published in *The Guardian* on June 5th, 2013 (Greenwald 2014, 35-42, 95-96).

At the time of making the leaks, Snowden was only 29 years old but already a seasoned expert on the technological sides of national security. He told Greenwald that, like with many other people, 9/11 triggered his patriotism, and the further belief that the United States essentially fought for the good in the world led him to work for the state (Greenwald 2014, 59). He had always been interested in computers and the Internet and his technical skills guaranteed that he found work easily despite having never finished high school. In 2005 he worked as a technical expert for the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). In subsequent years he worked both in the US and abroad for the CIA, the NSA, and the Dell Corporation (which cooperated with the NSA), before ending up working for Booz Allen Hamilton in Hawaii (Greenwald 2014, 59-73). However, the access to classified CIA and NSA material made him realise that the United States worked abroad in a completely different manner than he had been led to believe. He came to notice that power does not go hand in hand with responsibility: the higher up on the ladder of power one climbs, the less there is responsibility and transparency (Greenwald 2014, 61-62).

What this lack of transparency and responsibility has enabled is the covert mass surveillance of the Internet in the name of security. Snowden talks of “state power against the people’s ability to meaningfully oppose that power” (*Citizenfour*). While working for the NSA, he has been directly involved in amplifying state power by designing methods and tools of surveillance; methods and tools that people cannot meaningfully oppose. Instead of making society more secure, Snowden sees this surveillance as a serious impingement on the essential freedom of the Internet. In its early days, people openly and freely participated in debates, whereas now, because of potential surveillance, they self-police their views. In other words, the mere possibility of surveillance “limits the powers of their [the people’s] intellectual exploration” (*Citizenfour*). And what, in his opinion, makes the freedom of the Internet so essential is the fact that the Internet itself provides intellectual freedom to those who use it. The force driving Snowden to become a whistleblower was the desire to tell people what surveillance was doing to their intellectual freedom and, consequently, what would happen to the privacy of Internet users (Greenwald 2013, 67; *Citizenfour*). In *Citizenfour*, Snowden states that for him intellectual freedom is more important than physical freedom; in other words, he would rather go to prison for leaking information that reveals the scope of NSA surveillance than have that surveillance curtail his or anyone else’s intellectual freedom.

Thus, Snowden did not become a whistleblower on the spur of the moment. According to Greenwald, he had been contemplating it since 2009, and when it became clear that even Obama’s presidency would not change matters for the better, he started mining NSA databases for documents he would eventually leak. He told no one what he was doing, and when he was finished he took a leave, packed his bags, and flew to Hong Kong, where he arrived on May 20th, 2013. He did everything openly so no one else would be accused and because he wanted to make clear he was not a mole working for a foreign power (Greenwald 2014, 54-73).

The content of the documents Snowden leaked is staggering. They show that the NSA has a wide authorisation to monitor US citizens, and its authorisation to monitor foreign national is practically unlimited. For instance, the agency has a programme called Prism that can monitor the users of, among others, Facebook, Google, Apple, YouTube, and Skype. Its modus operandi is based on straight access to the companies’ servers (Greenwald 2014, 99-100). Furthermore, Snowden’s revelations have also proven that the NSA has outright lied to several United States senators about how many Americans are under NSA surveillance. The agency has always insisted that the number cannot be known. In reality, the NSA has a computer programme called Boundless Informant, whose purpose is to analyse the scope of surveillance mathematically. In other words, it provides

statistics on how many phone calls and emails the NSA monitors, something that the NSA has stated to be impossible (Greenwald 2014, 46-47).

As far as whistleblowers go, what sets Snowden apart is the fact that he voluntarily gave the revelations a face: he openly explained his motives in a video interview published on *The Guardian* website on June 9th (Greenwald 2014, 111). He states his motivations in this to be twofold. On the one hand, he thinks the public is owed an explanation of the motivations behind such disclosures, and on the other, he is of the view that making disclosures anonymously gives the government a mandate to use the same method (Snowden 2013).

Following the twists and turns of Snowden's tale are like following a thriller movie script. He contacts journalists anonymously using encrypted emails and chats, absconds to Hong Kong without telling anyone, meets the journalists in a public area of his hotel holding a Rubik's cube in his hands, and voluntarily agrees to a video interview and thus gives the leaks a face. On June 23rd, 2013, while media and supposedly also US officials were tearing around Hong Kong trying to find him, Snowden flew to Moscow, where he spent over a month in the transit zone of the Sheremetyevo Airport due to the US cancelling his passport. On August 1st, his request for temporary asylum in Russia was granted ("Timeline of Edward Snowden's revelations").

In July 2014, the Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ), a British intelligence and security organisation, told *The Guardian* that it would not allow the paper to publish any more articles based on the top secret NSA documents. Because the constitution of the United Kingdom does not guarantee press freedom, the press is often forced to obey the government in such matters. However, when GCHQ wanted all the documents to be handed over, *The Guardian* only agreed to destroy the hard drives containing said documents. After all, if the documents had been handed over, GCHQ and the NSA, with whom it collaborates, would have found out precisely what kind of information Snowden had leaked (Greenwald 2014, 284-285).

Snowden himself remains in Russia, making occasional appearances in the media. He has continued to campaign for government transparency and freedom of speech across the globe, also providing new revelations on electronic surveillance and agitating for restraining it. One of his most recent public appearances was on the premiere episode of Al Jazeera English's current affairs programme *UpFront* on September 4th, 2015. While the content of that interview is not relevant to this study, the news network in whose programme it appeared on is. What follows is a brief introduction to said network.

3 Al Jazeera and Al Jazeera English

Al Jazeera English has the rare distinction of being the first English-language international news network to originate in the Middle East (Amin 2012, 29). Its mission of balancing the flow of information and news between the North and the South and its stated goal of providing the public with all sides of an issue has gained it many advocates. However, before delving more closely into the workings of Al Jazeera English, one must take a closer look at what came before it, namely the Arabic-language Al Jazeera.

Before the establishment of Al Jazeera, the Middle East was not particularly well known for unbiased and free media producing high-quality journalism. Media were initially introduced, established, and controlled in Arab countries by their Western colonisers. After gaining their independence, most Arab societies harnessed these media to serve the ends of nation-building. Media control “was justified by the desire ... to break away from the message of colonisers, into a discourse of unity, social development and loyalty” (Murray 2011, 9-10). Thus, prior to the launching of the Qatari satellite news channel, the region’s news production was to a large part reduced to directives issued by governmental information ministries, colouring the reporting of events to whichever shade the respective governments found appropriate, making it difficult for people to find accurate and trustworthy accounts of current affairs (Murray 2011, 1). According to el-Nawawy and Iskander, the purpose was to control dissent “so that the political regimes can remain in power” (2003, 28-29). The situation started to change in the 1990s, which saw the proliferation of international satellite channels in the Middle East. After gaining access to international media, Arab publics began to realise that the information they were receiving from Arab sources was often fake or twisted to suit the needs of the government (Murray 2011, 34-35). Thus, according to Murray, “[t]he dominance of CNN’s unfiltered coverage of the Gulf War made Arab governments realise for the first time the tangible threat of transnational satellite television and alerted them to the importance of transnational media” (2011, 34).¹¹

Then along came Emir Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, the ruler of the “oil-and-natural-gas-rich microstate, Qatar”. The year before the launching of Al Jazeera, which took place on November 1st, 1996, the emir had peacefully seized power from his father and begun to open and liberalise the

¹¹ To fully understand the importance of transnational and international satellite television channels in the Arab world, one must take into account the fact that illiteracy rates are quite high in the area. Because of this, audio-visual media are more popular than print media. Furthermore, government control over radio and television “meant stifling the opposition who lacked these means of communication, especially since the majority of the Arab public are illiterate and do not have access to other means of communication” (Murray 2011, 27).

country (Powers 2012, 7-8). One reason for the establishment of Al Jazeera was, according to Powers, “to give the Qatari emir a megaphone to challenge the Egyptian and Saudi governments by broadcasting programming featuring popular Egyptian and Saudi political dissidents” (2012, 10). Indeed, from its inception, Al Jazeera has stirred the waters with controversial and provocative topics, such as political corruption, women’s rights, homosexuality, and Islamic fundamentalism, as well as aimed to give room to all sides and opinions of an issue (Powers 2012, 8-9; el-Nawawy and Iskander 2003, 29; Figenschou 2012, 42). It was the first Arab news network to interview top Israeli officials and leaders (among them even Israel’s former prime minister, Ehud Barak), which angered many Arab leaders used to tight media control (el-Nawawy and Iskander 2003, 29; Murray 2011, 80). This is why, among other things, many Arab regimes are disinclined to give state advertising to a transnational medium like Al Jazeera and why they have also pressured the private sector to refrain from advertising with the channel. Some regimes have even closed Al Jazeera offices (Murray 2011, 38).

What made Al Jazeera different from the other Arab media was its “mission to produce programming that was journalistically sound and free from government interference”, something quite unheard of in the propaganda-saturated Middle Eastern news media at the time (Powers 2012, 8). One of the reasons for the channel’s rapid success among Arab spectators was the fact that it had an extensive network of journalists from practically every country in the region, able to deepen their reporting with local knowledge (Powers 2012, 22). What also added to the popularity of the channel was its bold and uncompromising broadcasting style, which “has sparked controversial debates on numerous occasions” (Murray 2011, 55).¹² According to Youmans, as a pan-Arab news organisation that grants uncensored airtime to dissidents and publics from around the Middle East, Al Jazeera also hailed “the beginning of a transnational Arab public sphere” (2012, 60). Its overall reception in the Middle East has been varied, “with some Arab regimes accusing it of being an avenue for dissident voices and a conspirator in antigovernment movements, others acknowledging the network as a sole voice of journalistic objectivity in a conflict-ridden region” (el-Nawawy and Iskander 2003, 22).

The only country in the region that has not had its dirty laundry aired on Al Jazeera is its home base, Qatar (Powers 2012, 9-10). According to el-Nawawy and Iskander, despite seeming quite

¹² One reason for the superior quality of Al Jazeera journalism compared to other Arab channels was the fact that it had a significant number of BBC-trained journalists working for it. This was due to the fact that mere months before Al Jazeera’s launch, the British-Saudi joint venture, BBC Arabic, disintegrated because BBC Arabic had aired a programme criticising Saudi Arabia’s human rights record, which angered the channel’s Saudi financiers and caused disagreements between them and BBC editors over editorial freedom. Al Jazeera scooped up a significant number of the hundreds of suddenly unemployed journalists to create the core of its news team (Murray 2011, 17; Powers 2012, 9).

liberal compared to most other Middle Eastern and Arab states, from a Western viewpoint freedom of speech and freedom of the press are severely restricted in Qatar. Even though there is no formal censorship of the media, in practice political and social pressures lead the media to censor themselves (el-Nawawy and Iskander 2003, 75-77). Furthermore, Al Jazeera has stated that the reason why Qatar hardly ever features on the channel's news is because it is a small country where hardly anything ever happens. According to the channel, the bigger and more influential states in the region merit more space and attention, a claim that, on closer scrutiny, seems to have more to do with censorship than with the relative importance of news stories (el-Nawawy and Iskander 2003, 84).

In the Western world, Al Jazeera stayed mostly under the radar until the terrorist attacks in New York and Washington, D.C., on September 11th, 2001, mainly because its working language was Arabic. According to Youmans, during the presidency of Bill Clinton, the channel "was both praised for reform initiated by an American ally in the region, and assailed in some quarters for its critical coverage of American foreign policy in Israel-Palestine and Iraq" (2012, 61). However, initial praise from Western governments changed into criticism after 9/11, especially because Al Jazeera had exclusive access to video footage of Osama bin Laden's speeches (Murray 2011, 81-82; el-Nawawy and Iskander 2003, 21). On the other hand, after the American invasion of Afghanistan in late 2001, other news organisations around the world were eager to purchase the channel's footage due to the simple fact that Al Jazeera was the only international news network that had a bureau in the Afghan capital Kabul (Powers 2012, 11; Youmans 2012, 60; el-Nawawy and Iskander 2003, 24).¹³ As el-Nawawy and Iskander state, Al Jazeera became "an unofficial two-way communications channel between the Arab and the Western world" with which "[t]he Arab world tunes in for information, and foreign networks tune in for material and footage" (2003, 156). Furthermore, Al Jazeera's concentration on "civilian suffering, collateral damage and humanitarian crisis" in its portrayal of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan was criticised for being overly sentimental and even anti-American, causing US government officials and media to claim it was siding with Al Qaeda, the Taliban, and bin Laden (Murray 2011, 82-83; Powers 2012, 12).¹⁴ According to Seib, this tactic "worked well among those who had never seen the channel's newscasts and were ready to believe that it was part of an Arab terrorist conspiracy" (2012, 190). It did not help that the channel's executives refused to follow requests to censor content (el-Nawawy

¹³ Other international satellite stations did not start reporting from Kabul until after the fall of the Taliban regime in late 2001 (el-Nawawy and Iskander 2003, 51-52).

¹⁴ Wessler and Adolphsen note that while Al Jazeera is not as anti-American as its critics claim, its coverage of civilian casualties in the Iraq War does not reach the same level of neutrality as its other reporting (2008, 445).

and Iskander 2003, 23). On the other hand, Youmans contemplates the possibility that being hated by the Bush administration likely made the network better known and more visible internationally, although the fact that Al Jazeera showed war footage and pictures other international news media censored also contributed to its visibility (2012, 61).¹⁵

Where Al Jazeera Arabic was launched to provide more unbiased and independent news from the Middle East to the Middle East, Al Jazeera English was launched to fill a void that other international, mainly English-language media seemed unable to fill: to produce high-quality news stories from the Middle East, by local people, and for international consumption (Powers 2012, 7). With footage from the US-led “war on terror”, Al Jazeera had already become a global brand. The downside was that people who did not speak Arabic could not follow its original coverage; Al Jazeera English was established in order to redress this situation (Murray 2011, 80).

The launching of Al Jazeera English did not take place without a few hiccups. Instead of taking the easy way out and merely translating Al Jazeera’s Arabic footage into English, the idea from the start was to set up a news outlet separate from the original Al Jazeera but still drawing from the prestige and visibility of the brand. The first attempt at this was an English-language website, Al Jazeera Net, launched on March 24th, 2003, five days after the US-led coalition had invaded Iraq. The launch was promptly followed by denial of service attacks and hackers redirecting visitors to pro-US sites and imagery; finally, the website’s hosts cancelled their contract with Al Jazeera, leaving the site without a reliable host (Powers 2012, 12-13). Next came the attempt to establish Al Jazeera English as an entity completely independent of and separate from Al Jazeera Arabic, something that quickly led to tensions and animosity between the two operations. Many veteran journalists at the Arabic-language side were insulted that the new arrivals tried to distance themselves from the original channel, which the veterans had helped build. Finally, Al Jazeera’s board of directors intervened and restructured all of Al Jazeera’s separate channels, including Al Jazeera Arabic and Al Jazeera International (as Al Jazeera English was initially called) into the Al Jazeera Network (Powers 2012, 18-21). The official launch of Al Jazeera English took place on November 15th, 2006, coinciding with the 10-year anniversary of Al Jazeera Arabic.

¹⁵ According to Youmans, the arresting and detaining of Al Jazeera reporters as well as the bombing of the channel’s offices in both Kabul and Baghdad by the American forces during the Iraq and Afghan Wars has, in some quarters in the West, been seen as further proof that Al Jazeera was on the side of the enemy in the “war on terror” (2012, 61). The bombing of the Kabul office merely led to the temporary halt of original footage Al Jazeera footage from Afghanistan, whereas the bombing of the Baghdad office resulted in the death of a correspondent (el-Nawawy and Iskander 2003, 25, 204-205). One can only speculate how much these bombings influenced the popularity of anti-American sentiments in the area.

Where Al Jazeera Arabic “made its name in the Arab world for its hard, critical coverage of the 1998 ‘Desert Fox’ operation, in which the United States bombed Iraq, and the attacks on Sudan and Afghanistan that targeted Osama bin Laden” (Youmans 2012, 61), Al Jazeera English gained its reputation in 2011 during the Arab Spring (Amin 2012, 33). By taking up a kind of networked journalism that allowed local reporters and protesters voice their information and opinions, it “challenged the heads of ‘global South’ states” as well as “subverted Arab leaders such as Libya’s Muammar Gaddafi, Tunisia’s Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, and Egypt’s Hosni Mubarak by covering closely, and helping advance, the uprisings in their respective countries” (Youmans 2012, 63). In fact, Al Jazeera English “was the sole English-language news outlet with uninterrupted live video of the demonstrations in the Egyptian capital” in spite of the fact that government forces closed their offices and detained their reporters (Amin 2012, 35).¹⁶

According to Figenschou, Al Jazeera English “aims to report forgotten stories from the *perspective of the voiceless* – the Global South, the underprivileged, the subaltern, the underdog, and the disenfranchised”, which is why it has a policy of hiring local correspondents instead of sending in outsiders (2012, 41-42, emphasis in the original). It furthermore boasts an extensive number of bureaus around the world and especially “in the Global South where its competitors are scarcely represented” (Figenschou 2012, 42), a thing of importance when fulfilling its mission of balancing the information flow between the South and the North (Amin 2012, 29).¹⁷ However, the aspirations of Al Jazeera English to report from the perspective of the voiceless go beyond the geographical division of the world into the developed North and the underdeveloped South. According to Figenschou, “the channel intends to cover the *other opinion* in international news, those diverging, oppositional, controversial views and voices that are rarely invited onto mainstream news media programs” (2012, 42). Furthermore, the South from whose viewpoint Al Jazeera English reports is not merely a geographical entity but “a state of mind” (Figenschou 2012, 43). The Al Jazeera journalists that Figenschou interviewed explained that North tends to refer to those who have wealth and economic and political power, whereas South means those who are heard from less often: the disenfranchised, the underprivileged, and the subaltern mentioned above (Figenschou 2013, 41-43). Al Jazeera’s mission is to turn news flows and report news from the perspective of the underdogs as well.

¹⁶ Curiously, as will be seen in chapter 6.3 below, Chelsea Manning has also been given partial credit for spurring on the Arab Spring. On hindsight, looking back on what has happened in the Middle East and North Africa, this credit now seems somewhat dubious.

¹⁷ On the other hand, Al Jazeera English has also been criticised for its concentration on the South; to put it bluntly, it often seems that for AJE the North does not exist (Murray 2011, 58).

Bringing up the perspective of the voiceless is one reason why I chose Al Jazeera English as the target of my study: I wanted to see how it framed Chelsea Manning, who arguably is an underdog compared to the United States. Furthermore, Al Jazeera was not involved in the initial publication of the Afghan War Logs, only stepping in to help the Bureau of Investigative Journalism, a London-based non-profit journalism organisation, investigate the Iraq War Logs. It also aired a documentary produced by the Bureau on both its Arabic and English channels, as well as publishing news stories on the content of the logs alongside other WikiLeaks collaborators in October, 2010 (Leigh and Harding 2013, 136-138). Also, to my knowledge, no one has studied Manning's framing (or the framing of any other whistleblower) on Al Jazeera English before. However, before delving into the actual analysis, a brief look at frame analysis, my method of study, is in order.

4 Frame Analysis

According to the founding father of frame analysis, Erving Goffman, the question one must ask when coming into a situation is "What is it that is going on here?" (1986, 8). Answering this question provides one with a definition of said situation (1986, 1), or, in other words, a frame. What are included in the frame are all the details of the situation that are relevant and necessary to form a definition of it. Frame analysis, the study of these frames, is, in Goffman's words, the study of "the organization of experience" (1986, 11). Frames are constructed within the minds of people and in relation to certain contexts and events. In short, frames are definitions of situations, and frame analysis studies their content and creation (Horsti 2005, 49). Being a sociologist, when Goffman talked about frames, he mainly talked about individuals and how they organise their experiences of society, rather than about the organisation of society itself (1986, 13). Subsequently, however, frame analysis has been applied to a wide field of research within the social sciences, from sociology to political and media studies.

In Entman's definition, "[t]he verb 'to frame' (or 'framing') refers to the process of selecting and highlighting some aspects of a perceived reality, and enhancing the salience of an interpretation and evaluation of that reality" (2004, 25). This process is hardly impartial and neutral, since anything that is based on interpretations, selections, and evaluations is bound to be subjective, composed of tacit notions of the world and what takes place in it (Entman 2004, 5, 25; Gitlin 2003, 6). Media frames, by extension, are "persistent patterns of cognition, interpretation, and presentation, of selection, emphasis and exclusion, by which symbol-handlers routinely organize discourse, whether verbal or visual" (Gitlin 2003, 7). For the sake of efficiency, journalists need frames to organise the

flow of information (ibid.). Also, because of this routine nature of framing, especially critical media studies have noted the tendency of frames to unconsciously uphold the status quo (Horsti 2005, 54). In short, within the bounds of journalism, a media frame is “[w]hat makes the world beyond direct experience look natural” (Gitlin 2003, 6). However, there is also choice involved: for instance, the same event can be framed in several different ways, using different viewpoints, emphasising different aspects (Karvonen 2000, 78). In this manner, as will be seen in the analysis chapters below, Chelsea Manning can be framed differently, based on what aspects of her life are emphasised and how their meaning is interpreted. In Gitlin’s words, media are “like fun house mirrors”: they reflect what is in front of them, at the same time distorting it. They are not flat mirrors portraying the world as it is, but neither are they abstract paintings of that world (Gitlin 2003, 109).

Gitlin’s premise concerning the importance of analysing journalistic frames is that media, by influencing and determining “public assumptions, attitudes, and moods, are significant actors in the formation, control, and distribution of ideology (2003, 9). Even though publics do not have to take media frames as they receive them, these frames still influence their thinking, especially with issues not within their direct sphere of experience (Gitlin 2003, 142). The power of the media is the power to define, to give meaning. This kind of power is symbolic and discursive, often not visible but always pervasive in its ability to shape people’s thinking (Horsti 2005, 77). Furthermore, according to Goffman, “[t]he reporting of an event and its documentation are not to be seen only as reductions or abstractions of the original, but are also understood to possibly influence later occurrences of the real thing” (1986, 79). For instance the framing of whistleblowers in media, apart from affecting people’s attitudes towards them and their deeds, may also have great bearing on later occurrences of whistleblowing. Framing whistleblowers negatively might dissuade others not to follow in their footsteps, while positive frames might work in the opposite manner.

In the end, the framing on news items boils down to media’s attempts to influence the hearts and minds of the public. This is why primary or dominant frames are so important. According to Goffman, “a primary framework is one that is seen as rendering what would otherwise be a meaningless aspect of the scene into something that is meaningful” (1986, 21). It is the first answer to the question of what is going on in a situation, the first time a situation is defined. In today’s media-saturated societies primary or dominant frames are of the utmost importance since they can determine how a certain issue is subsequently discussed, how it is presented to the public, and what kind of impressions the public will receive from it. First impressions are hard to supplant, which further heightens the importance of dominant frameworks. According to Horsti, the clearer the

dominant frames are, the more difficult for alternative frames to be heard (2005, 54). Thus, when a newsworthy event happens, the first to present a plausible explanatory frame for it often has a significant amount of power over what is written about the event in the future. For instance, as was mentioned in 2.5 above, Edward Snowden identified himself as the whistleblower behind the NSA leaks in 2013, explaining his motivations before the NSA or the US government had a chance to say anything on the source of the leak. His coming forth also ensured that the media would consequently have his statement as background material, in part directing the framings they would opt to use.

Finally, it is important to take into account that, much in the same way as frames are subjective and based on interpretations and evaluations, frame analysis is qualitative research and thus open to interpretations (Horsti 2005, 51). The frames I have identified in my source material, discussed in detail in chapter 5 and its subchapters below, are based, up to a point, on my own interpretations and evaluations of the sources as well as on the sources themselves, and thus have a dimension of subjectivity to them. Furthermore, as is generally the case with qualitative textual analyses, because of the small size of the investigated sample of texts, the scope of this study is limited. In other words, it would not be prudent to make generalisations on the framing of whistleblowers in media based on the finding of this study alone. As David et al. point out, “[i]nvestigations that need generalizability demand some form of quantification” (2011, 331). To provide some wider context, before delving into the analysis of Chelsea Manning’s framing on Al Jazeera English’s opinion article, a quick word on previous studies on the subject is in order.

4.1 Previous Studies

As I discovered during the writing of this thesis, the framing of whistleblowers in media is a surprisingly little researched topic, despite several notable instances of whistleblowing in recent years (see section 2 above). The most general exploration of the subject is provided by Wahl-Jorgensen and Hunt, who have studied how the national press in the United Kingdom has portrayed whistleblowers from 1997 to 2009. Their findings show that over half of the instances were positive, while 41 per cent were neutral and merely five per cent negative. They also noted that within the timeframe of their study, attitudes towards whistleblowers have become more positive (2012, 407).

Julian Assange and WikiLeaks have received slightly more attention on this score. Luther and Radovic have studied whether they have been framed as part of journalism in *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *Le Monde*, and *Le Figaro*. According to their findings, *The New York Times* did not consider WikiLeaks to be a journalistic outlet and showed great dislike towards Assange. *The Washington Post*, on the other hand, considered WikiLeaks to be a form of journalism (although downplayed the significance of the leaked diplomatic cables) and was critical of Assange as a person but not as a journalist or an activist. *Le Figaro* was scathing towards both, stating Assange to be no journalist and questioning WikiLeaks' whole mode of operation, while *Le Monde* used neutral labels for both but showed veiled empathy and support in its framing choices and implied Assange to be a journalist (Luther and Radovic 2014).

However, unlike in Luther and Radovic's study, frame analyses concerning WikiLeaks and Assange rarely concentrate on them per se, instead focusing on the framing of other relevant issues within the news coverage of WikiLeaks' big scoops, especially the diplomatic cables. A connecting theme in many of the studies, in both premises and findings, seems to be the nation and, in particular, national security.¹⁸ Bruckmann and Flesch studied how transparency was presented and discussed in relation to WikiLeaks in the US government website, five major US newspapers, and five US political blogs. They found three frames, which, in the order of frequency, were the national security frame (WikiLeaks is an anti-American organisation endangering US national security), the mediated transparency frame (WikiLeaks merely dumps information on the Internet and media are needed to make it relevant), and the accountability frame (the people have a right to know a lot of the information that the US is keeping secret because of over-classification) (Bruckmann and Flesch 2013). Handley and Ismail, on the other hand, studied the framing of WikiLeaks in *Canberra Times* (Australia) and *Haaretz* (Israel), noting that matters of national interest were dominant. Initially, when not much was known about the content of the revelations, both papers followed US government officials and framed WikiLeaks as a national security threat. However, they shifted to using it as a legitimate journalistic source to write stories even when officials would not speak. They also used WikiLeaks as an opportunity to briefly debate what should constitute national interest (Handley and Ismail 2012). Handley and Rutigliano investigated "how different layers of the U.S. news media system framed Assange and WikiLeaks, and how they incorporated the cables that WikiLeaks released into their news coverage" (2012, 749). Established broadcast networks (ABC, CBS, and NBC) framed WikiLeaks as a threat to national security and

¹⁸ Perhaps this is a symptom of how national news organisations, no matter what country they operate in, find it confusing when they have to deal with an organisation such as WikiLeaks that is, by definition, nationless: it does not bow to any nation state or view any of them as beyond or not in need of its scrutiny.

Assange as a criminal and even a terrorist without making much use of the cables themselves. *Democracy Now!*, an independent news programme, framed WikiLeaks as a whistleblower and talked of crimes committed by the US abroad. Glenn Greenwald, at the time a *Salon* blogger, concentrated on criticising establishment journalism for having too close ties with the state and the government, saying that by attacking WikiLeaks, they were attacking a threat to their control over information flows. Finally, *The Daily Show*, a “fake” news programme, trivialised the leaks and presented WikiLeaks’ goal of transparency as ridiculous, while also demanding “more revealing and relevant information” if the organisation continued to publish leaks (Handley and Rutigliano 2012).

Edward Snowden’s framing has been covered in a couple of studies, of which Di Salvo and Negro’s perused the online editions of *The Guardian*, *The New York Times*, *The South China Morning Post* (in Hong Kong), and *The People’s Daily* (the official newspaper of the Chinese Communist Party). They found Snowden to be framed, in the order of most to least used, as a whistleblower, hero, victim, and traitor, with their own suggested frame, mole, never used (Di Salvo and Negro 2015). Qin, on the other hand, had a look at how established media and Twitter framed Snowden and his leaks. He found that Twitter was overwhelmingly positive towards him, its most common frames being whistleblower, bipartisan (i.e. involved in political opposition), and privacy, whereas news in established media mostly framed him in terms of national security and international relations and viewed him as a traitor (Qin 2015).

The only analysis of Manning’s framing in media that I was able to find was by Thorsen et al., who conducted “a comparative study of online news framing of Manning” in *The Guardian*, *The New York Times*, and *Der Spiegel*, the three papers with which WikiLeaks initially collaborated with (2013, 101-102). They detected five different framings: whistleblower, victim, hero, villain, and entertainment. The most prominent of these was that of a whistleblower: “someone who has disclosed information, exposing or potentially exposing wrongdoing or corruption of information that might be embarrassing to the US government” (2013, 111-112). The important thing to notice is that even when the illegality of leaking was noted, this framing “neither praised nor condemned” Manning (ibid.). The second most common framing that Thorsen et al. discovered was that of Manning as a victim, mostly in the context of the harsh conditions of her incarceration (2013, 113). Framing her as a hero was rare, and villain framing even rarer. The final frame, that of entertainment, was only used in reference to the stage performance of the play *The Radicalisation of Bradley Manning*, and did not refer to Manning’s persona as such (2013, 114-115). Thorsen et al. also noted that often there was more than one frame applied in a single article, in which case the

secondary framing was usually used to strengthen the primary framing instead of providing oppositional or competing frames (2013, 116). The main finding was, however, that all the papers tried to present Manning in a balanced and neutral manner (Thorsen et al. 2013, 119).

5 Analysis: Framing Chelsea Manning on Al Jazeera English

As can be deduced from the findings of Thorsen et al.'s study, the production of news stories is governed by the strictures of neutrality, impartiality, and balance, both in word choices and in views brought forth. Because of this, the frames they utilise are often opaque, ambiguous, and thus difficult to pin down. For this reason, the framing choices in opinion articles provide a wider and deeper object of study: opinions, by definition, do not have to be neutral, impartial, or balanced. Unlike news articles, whose scope is usually limited to conveying the bare facts of the situation at hand, opinions can provide deeper contextualisation as well as contain an array of conjecture, speculation, and theorising. For this kind of wider range of material for analysis, this study will concentrate on the framing of Chelsea Manning on Al Jazeera English's opinion articles.

The frames I will utilize in this study closely resemble those employed by Thorsen et al., as described above. They include victim, hero, whistleblower, and traitor, with the addition of transgender that I also found represented in my data sample. I will also follow Thorsen et al.'s example in identifying primary and secondary frames in the articles using two framings. The articles I will be analysing have been obtained from the website of Al Jazeera English (www.aljazeera.com) by using the search word "bradley manning". From among these, I selected the ones that were labelled opinions. To avoid articles that merely mention Manning in passing, I only chose the ones that mention her name twice or more. I also left out one article that was labelled an opinion but was in fact an interview. The articles remaining after these omissions amount to 34, published between 9th December, 2010, and 22nd September, 2013. The full list of articles with publication dates, writers' names, and titles can be found in Appendix 1 below.

Also, as was the case in Thorsen et al.'s study, some of the articles used more than one framing to portray Manning. Similarly to Thorsen et al., I also noticed that the "secondary framing was most frequently used to reinforce the primary framing ... as opposed to providing balance between competing framing positions" (2013, 116). The table below summarises the frequency of use for each frame, both as primary and as secondary framing.

	Primary frame	Secondary frame
Whistleblower	21	3
Victim	9	6
Hero	3	1
Traitor	0	4
Transgender	1	1

It is not within the scope of this study to explore further the writers of the articles analysed.

However, a few superficial observations are still in order. Firstly, most of the writers appear to be American, or at least Western. One could speculate that this may be because many of the articles are also openly and often severely critical of the United States, which might make it difficult to publish in American mainstream media. Al Jazeera English offers them a potentially worldwide English-speaking audience, a lot wider than any alternative media in the US. Furthermore, there seems to be a significant number of university people and bloggers among them, and some of the articles have been published elsewhere, mostly in alternative media such as TomDispatch.com, before Al Jazeera English. Finally, none of the opinion articles were written by representatives of the United States or people who had negative views about Manning. I found this to be somewhat surprising because, as was stated in chapter 3, one of the missions of Al Jazeera English is to present “the opinion and the other opinion”, i.e. all sides of an issue. A further matter worthy of notice is the disclaimer present at the end of every opinion article. It goes as follows: “The views expressed in this article are the author’s own and do not necessarily reflect Al Jazeera’s editorial policy”. Thus, the opinions cannot be taken as Al Jazeera’s official views on the matter of Chelsea Manning (I will return to this in my concluding remarks in chapter 6). However, before turning on to the analysis of these opinions, a brief look at Manning’s framing in Al Jazeera’s news stories is in order to provide some background.

5.1 Framing Chelsea Manning in the News

To set the opinion articles into a wider context, I also had a look at news articles discussing Manning on Al Jazeera English. For this purpose, I used the same word search as with the opinions, “bradley manning”, and chose all the articles published during 2013 (the year of Manning’s trial) that had the word “Manning” in their title and that were not labelled opinions. Of these, I left out the ones that were introductions to satellite news programmes or videos of other kind, of which

there were four.¹⁹ The full list of articles with publication dates and titles can be found in Appendix 2 below. Writers' names are not included because they were not provided.

In the news stories, Manning was framed in three different ways. The articles themselves presented her as a person who gave classified information to WikiLeaks, which then made that information public. However, to distinguish this framing from the whistleblower frame presented below (see 5.2), I will call it the leaker frame. There are two reasons for making this distinction. Firstly, as will be noted in chapter 5.2, the whistleblower frame in Al Jazeera English's opinion articles is openly positive towards Manning whereas the leaker frame in the news stories is decidedly neutral, as will be demonstrated below. Applying different terms highlight this. Secondly, the second of the three frames present in the news stories is whistleblower, mainly used by Manning's supporters and her defence during the trial. The third frame employed is that of traitor, mainly used by the prosecution during Manning's trial.

With the leaker frame, word choices play a significant part. The verbs describing Manning's deeds vary from the relatively neutral "passing", "giving", "sending", "releasing", "leaking", and "handing over" to the moderately positive "providing" and "exposing" and the somewhat negative "spilling". The same neutral line is also followed in descriptions of the leaks themselves, the most common being "secret documents", "government secrets", and "classified information" or their variations. What is noteworthy, however, is that the unprecedented size of the leaked material is emphasised: these "reams of classified information" and "troves of US government secrets" are described as "the most voluminous release of classified material" and "the biggest breach of classified data" in the history of the United States. The only downright negative description of the leaks is that it was "Manning's data dump", which connotes indiscriminate dissemination, as well as bringing to mind rubbish, waste, and defecation.

Although Manning is called a whistleblower in several articles (mainly in titles and subtitles, supposedly for the sake of identification and clarity), the actual whistleblower frame is only used when quoting or paraphrasing Manning herself, her defence, and her supporters. Manning herself tells her motive for leaking was the desire to give rise to debate about the role of the military and diplomacy as well as to expose the military's "blood lust" and disregard for human life. Several articles state that her lawyer describes her as a "naïve but well-intentioned soldier who wanted to show Americans the reality of war in Iraq and Afghanistan" and who, instead of selling the

¹⁹ Three of these articles served as an introduction to an episode of Al Jazeera English's current affairs programme *Inside Story*, and one introduced an interview of a Manning supporter.

documents to a genuine enemy, gave them to WikiLeaks to “spark reform” and debate. The word pair “naïve whistleblower” is commonly used. Supporters are also said to have “hailed Manning as a whistleblower”, and concern is shown by the American Civil Liberties Union and an Amnesty International observer about the effects of her trial and conviction on future whistleblowers, simultaneously neatly identifying her as one.²⁰

In the news articles, the traitor frame is exclusively attributed to Manning’s opponents, especially the prosecution in her court case. She is described as an “arrogant soldier”, “an anarchist computer hacker and attention-seeking traitor” who “indiscriminately leaked classified information”, thus aiding the enemy, and “betrayed the trust his nation put in him”. The prosecutor is said to have argued that Manning is a “traitor with one mission as an intelligence analyst in Iraq: to find and reveal secrets to a group of anarchists and bask in the glory”, also describing her as “gleeful” and trying to prove that she had “a general evil intent”.²¹

There are also a few other matters worthy of noting in the news articles. One of them is that no mention is made in the news articles about the content of the leaks, except for the Apache helicopter video (for a description, see chapter 1 above). In the few articles it is brought up, the video is condemned in clear terms, for example in the following: “the video has become an infamous example of US military malpractice”. Secondly, unlike in the opinion article where it is given quite a lot of space (see 5.3), Manning’s treatment is only mentioned in relation to how much it would reduce her final prison sentence. Furthermore, although it is described as “marked harsh”, the only details mentioned were solitary confinement and guards checking on her every few minutes. Thirdly, the last two articles in the sample addressed Manning transgender identity. What stood out was the fact that while “Bradley Manning” was substituted with “Chelsea Manning”, all the pronouns used in the articles remained in masculine form. Thus, we have sentences like “He considers himself to be a woman”. Apparently this is a common phenomenon in news media when talking about transgender people (Kalter 2008, 10; Tady 2012, 5).²²

²⁰ Also, one anonymous supporter is quoted shouting from the gallery to Manning during her trial “You’re a hero, Bradley, as far as I’m concerned”. Whether this can be labelled as any kind of hero framing is questionable, since it is more likely that it was thrown in as an entertaining anecdote.

²¹ There is also a description of Manning as “a spy and a traitor” who, by leaking classified information, has engaged in 21st century warfare against the United States. It is first attributed to State Department spokesperson P.J. Crowley, but in a subsequent article almost exactly the same words are accredited to former Defence Department spokesperson J.D. Gordon.

²² Also, the characterisation of WikiLeaks in the articles is worth a mention. Whether it is called a website, site, group, or organisation, there are three distinct modifiers in use, applied in three distinct stages. Initially, WikiLeaks is described as a “whistleblower” website, which is a fairly neutral label. Then, “whistleblower” is substituted with “anti-secrecy”, implying resistance and opposition. Finally, in the last sample articles, “anti-secrecy” gives way to “pro-

In summary, Al Jazeera's news stories seem to aim at neutrality and balance between different viewpoints, with the articles themselves framing Chelsea Manning as a leaker, leaving the more biased frames of whistleblower and traitor to her supporters and opponents, respectively. In contrast, as will become clear below, in Al Jazeera English's opinions she has been portrayed in overwhelmingly positive and supportive ways. Even the few articles that contain a framing of her as a traitor use that framing sarcastically (comparing Manning-the-purported-traitor with the "real" traitors inside the US government) or attribute it solely and clearly to the US government (see 5.5).

5.2 Whistleblower

The most prevalent framing for Chelsea Manning present in Al Jazeera English's opinion articles is that of whistleblower, which is the primary frame in 21 articles and secondary in 3. It is also the most evenly distributed frame within the timeframe of this study: it is used consistently throughout the material.

The way in which Manning is defined within the frame closely follows the definition of whistleblower provided in chapter 2. Accordingly, a whistleblower is a person, usually an insider, who makes public information that has not been public before, typically to expose wrongdoing or abuse and to advance public interest. Their motives are idealistic, moral, or ethical, and they act knowingly and voluntarily, not under outside pressure or for personal gain (Thorsen et al. 2013, 102-103; Sanders 2003, 113; Carlson 2011, 10; Vanderkerchove 2006, 22; Chapa 2013a, 19). It is also worth noting that, as opposed to Thorsen et al., in whose study whistleblower is the most neutral frame, usually expressing neither approval nor disapproval towards Manning's actions (2013, 111-112), the majority of the opinion articles on Al Jazeera English are overtly and emphatically approving.

A matter worth bearing in mind before delving into the actual analysis is that whistleblowing as a phenomenon obviously provides a wider context for all the articles discussing Manning, whatever their framings. In addition to numbers, whistleblower is the dominant frame within the sample by also being a sort of umbrella term for the most of the other frames. As will be further discussed below, Manning is framed as a victim, a hero, and a traitor within the wider framework of being a whistleblower: simply put, she is a hero/victim/traitor *because of* being, above all else, a

transparency", giving WikiLeaks a more positive vibe: after all, being *for* something does give a more favourable and approving image than being *against* something.

whistleblower. The transgender frame, on the other hand, is more like a parallel to the whistleblower frame: Manning is transgender *in addition to* being a whistleblower. To take this wider context of whistleblowing into account, I have counted only those articles that portray Manning in clear and unambiguous terms as a whistleblower (as defined above) to contain a whistleblower frame. In other words, there are articles within the sample that do not have a whistleblower frame even though whistleblowing as a phenomenon looms in the background; in these articles, Manning is framed in terms that are not directly related to her actions of making classified information public.

To begin, the following quote from Hind (2013, emphases mine) illustrates several of the central points of the whistleblower frame as presented above:

Manning decided to do what he did because he *independently* reached the conclusion that it would be *morally* wrong for him to remain silent. He decided that *the voting public should know* what he – and thousands of soldiers and diplomats – knew about the foreign entanglements of the United States. *At no point did he seek private advantage* from what he was doing.

Firstly, it is emphasised that Manning worked on her own and of her own free will. Secondly, there is the evocation of morality: Manning's actions were principled and carefully thought through (I will return to this issue in more detail below). Thirdly, there is the need for knowledge, in this case the need of the "voting public" to know what their country was doing abroad. Fourthly, the final sentence sums up one part of the definition of whistleblower: it is not done for personal gain.

Whistleblowing is, obviously, intrinsically intertwined with knowledge. A whistleblower makes classified or secret information publically available so that people would have knowledge of what is happening around them. For example Madar describes Manning's "gift to the republic" in the following terms: she "gave Americans – and the world – a far fuller sense of what the US government is actually doing abroad", and by "bringing us the truth" she also instigated "public supervision", "exposed the pathological over-classification of America's public documents", and "upheld a great American tradition of transparency in statecraft". Finally, "[t]hanks to the whistleblowing revelations attributed to Bradley Manning, we at least have a far clearer picture of the problems we face in trying to supervise our own government" (Madar 2011). Several articles describe Manning's actions in similar kind of terms: she was "exposing the ugly truth about the US empire" (Benjamin 2011); she "felt that the public had a right to know" (Hajjar 2011); her "evident intention was to inform people about the realities of government policies that were producing death and destruction in foreign countries" (Falk 2011); "Manning surmised that if American citizens had

some clue of what was actually happening in Iraq and Afghanistan, it might help avoid such disasters in the future” (Madar 2013a); and she “helped to shine a bright light on many of the lies that both justify and help obscure the underlying workings of unjust power – within the US and far beyond” (Nevins 2013). Manning herself is also given a chance to give her own explanation:

In the chatlogs, Manning offers a variety of straightforward justifications for leaking government material: “[I] want people to see the truth... because without information, you cannot make informed decisions as a public.” (Fernandez 2012)

In short, whistleblowing is about giving people the knowledge they need and deserve, about shining a light on what people and institutions with power are keeping in the dark, about public oversight and supervision, and about uncovering the “truth”, whatever that may be. Also, references and comparisons are made to other whistleblowers, mostly Daniel Ellsberg and Edward Snowden and also, on occasion, Julian Assange, with the understanding that they help provide public oversight of those in positions of power (Falk 2011; Rosenberg 2012; Falk 2013; LeVine 2013b; Rosenberg 2013a).

The above quote from Fernandez brings us to the question of motives, or as she puts it, “justifications”. As was already noted above in relation to the excerpt from Hind (2013), in the articles, Manning’s reasons for wanting to make the information public are presented as intrinsically tied to her morals. The same is echoed in several other articles: she acted according to the dictates of her conscience (Falk 2011; Benjamin 2011; LeVine 2013a). Anger and outrage are also brought up, for example in the following: “he was outraged by the killing he saw all around him and angered at the complicity of his higher-ups who weren’t prepared to do a damn thing about it” (Davis 2011). She is presented as someone who did not agree with or condone her fellow soldiers’ actions and behaviour, which were against her morals and beliefs, making the passing of classified documents to WikiLeaks “a clear act of civil disobedience” (Madar 2013a). The dichotomy between her personal morals and the actions of the US abroad are further explored in the following excerpts:

... he seems to have become deeply disenchanted with the unlawful and immoral manner with which the United States was using its military power, and the extent to which it was hiding war crimes behind heavy curtains of unwarranted secrecy. (Falk 2011)

She argued that the US had consciously elected to devalue human life both in Iraq and Afghanistan. (Kendzior 2013)

Of course, one must take into consideration that with opinion articles like these, the authors tend to concentrate on those of Manning's motives and thoughts they themselves agree with. There is also a possibility that they read more into what little is known for certain about Manning's opinions; what is known, after all, is mainly based on the famous chat logs (see 2.3) and what statements Manning and her lawyers made during her trial.

A central theme looming in the background of the whistleblower frame is the assumption that something is wrong with the system and the whistleblower is trying to fix it (this theme will be explored further in relation to other frames in chapters 5.3, 5.4, and 5.5). It is also the main reason for why the whistleblower frame in this study turned out to be more positive than neutral, as was the case with Thorsen et al.'s study (see 4.1). As was already mentioned above, the writer of an opinion article tends to agree with the opinions he or she writes about, which in turn leads to a framing that in other contexts might be neutral to turn out more on the positive side. LeVine (2013b) formulates it in the following manner:

... what Snowden and Manning realised was that the system was so dangerously broken that they had to sacrifice themselves, if necessary, to try to stop it. They could not live with themselves any other way.

Apart from describing the self-sacrificing personality of whistleblowers (for more, see hero frame in 5.4), the above quote also presents a dichotomy between people like Manning and Snowden and the majority of Americans, a fundamental difference in their ways of thinking and their morality. The same is expressed in the following quotes as well:

Unlike a US senator, our recent crop of whistleblowers weren't conditioned by years in Washington to value their oaths to powerful institutions over their duty as members of the human race to defend the lives and liberties of the powerless. Their innate sense of justice hadn't been driven out of them by an undue respect for the law and deference to a system that treats exposing criminality as a crime. (Davis 2013a)

The young private saw very clearly what so many professors and generals take pains to deny: that the primary function of the laws of war is not to restrain violence, but to justify it, often with the greatest lawyerly ingenuity. (Madar 2012b)

When Manning acted, she did so out of a conviction that her nation was what it proclaimed itself to be instead of the country it had become. She believed that violations must be exposed to be remedied. She believed that violations *could* be remedied, a belief many Americans, grown cynical and weary, have abandoned. But she no longer had faith in the institutions as avenues of accountability. Leaks are a plea to the public to hold to account the institutions that betray them. (Kendzior 2013, emphasis in the original)

In other words, as LeVine (2013a) argues, Manning turned out to be “any military’s worst nightmare – a soldier who decides to think for him or herself” (2013a). Instead of duplicating the actions of other soldiers and their higher-ups, who according to LeVine violated the military’s codes of conduct and the laws of the US, Manning decided to use her “own moral code to ignore the orders of superiors”.

In such a situation, ‘seizing’ up was precisely what needed to happen if such policies were to have a chance of being brought under control. But it was precisely what had to be prevented if the system was to continue. (LeVine 2013a)

According to LeVine, the most dangerous enemy for the US is the American people, who are the only ones who could “challenge its power and hold it accountable to American and international law” (2013a). The downside is that the system does not want anyone to interfere with its workings, which is why it attacks Manning, a whistleblower who tried to show the American people what is wrong so that the people would demand changes.

Finally, Kendzior also argues that people have to be capable of admitting that sometimes whistleblowing is justifiable and needed, even though they may not agree with the actions of whistleblowers in general:

... responding to Manning with a simple “She broke the law” negates the role of justice. What does it mean when those who expose war crimes are treated more harshly than those who perpetrate them – or those who manipulate the law to justify them? One does not need to like Manning to be appalled by what she revealed. One does not need to approve of her actions to be appalled by their necessity. The question is not whether Manning broke the law. It is whether the law is broken. (Kendzior 2013)

In other words, Kendzior is arguing that law does not equal justice. Sometimes law needs to be broken so that justice can be done, and sometimes abiding by laws leads to injustice. The implication is that Manning is trying to point out that the law is broken because abiding by it seemingly does not lead to justice.

As a summary, within the whistleblower frame Manning comes out as a person who, because of her high moral sensitivity and clear sense of right and wrong, had to confront and stand up to a system that is blind to human suffering. That confrontation took the form of whistleblowing, of making available for public consumption information that shows the faults of the system. Thus, even though the opinion articles analysed here do not discuss the content of the documents Manning leaked, that content is playing in the background, leading the articles to dwell on the system’s faults.

5.3 Victim

The Oxford Dictionary of English has many definitions for the word *victim*, of which the most appropriate for this occasion is the following: a victim is “a person who has come to feel helpless and passive in the face of misfortune or ill-treatment” (“Victim”). The victim frame is the second most used frame in the articles analysed, being primary in nine articles and secondary in six. Its use was also concentrated to the beginning and end of the timeframe with a gap in the middle. This gap works as a watershed: before it, the victim frame was mostly used in the context of Manning’s treatment in prison, whereas after it, the frame was mostly applied to her treatment during trial. To put it shortly, as will be more thoroughly explored below, victim in the context of the articles analysed refers primarily to a person whose treatment has been excessively harsh and often unjust and senseless compared to their alleged wrongdoings.

The most intriguing point about the victim frame was the larger context within which Manning was framed as a victim. Obviously, considering what took place during the first months of her captivity, her treatment in prison is frequently referred to. The articles talk of “demeaning and cruel conditions” (Falk 2011), “draconian” (Silver 2012) and “humiliating prison circumstances” (Falk 2012), “particularly vindictive and abusive treatment” (Engelhardt 2013), and “abusive tactics” such as “protracted isolation ... systematic humiliations ... routinised sleep deprivation ... forced nakedness at night and during an inspection of his cell every morning until his clothing is returned” (Hajjar 2011). The limitations of her existence in prison are often described in detail, as in the following excerpt from Benjamin (2011):

In addition to the horror of long-term solitary confinement, Manning is barred from exercising in his cell and is denied bed sheets or a pillow. And every five minutes, he must respond in the affirmative when asked by a guard if he’s “okay”. Presumably he lies.

Several of the articles go further than this, describing Manning’s treatment as “torturous” (Hajjar 2011; Timm 2011; Davis 2011) or otherwise making direct references to torture, as in the following examples:

... severe and sustained pre-trial abuse that amounts to torture. (Falk 2011)

Over 250 law professors, including President Obama’s Constitutional law professor at Harvard Law School, Laurence Tribe, signed a letter calling the treatment of Manning illegal, unconstitutional and possibly torture. (Timm 2011)

In return for his act of conscience, the US government is torturing him, humiliating him and trying to keep him behind bars for life. (Benjamin 2011)

There are also comparisons made between Manning's treatment and the treatment of suspected terrorists in such infamous places as the Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq and Guantánamo detention camp in Cuba. Perhaps to give more credence to the accusations, the writers quote administration insiders, supposedly at the same time trying to say that not everyone in the US government deems Manning's treatment justifiable:

"Is this Quantico or Abu Ghraib?" asked US Representative Dennis Kucinich. Good question, congressman. Like the men imprisoned in former President Bush's Iraqi torture chamber, Manning is being abused and humiliated – despite having not so much as been in a military tribunal, much less convicted of an actual crime. (Benjamin 2011)

Colonel Ann Wright, a former top State Department official who resigned in protest of the 2003 Iraqi war, says Manning's treatment at the hands of the Obama administration is an outrage that is at odds with the norms of military justice. He's been treated "as if he were an enemy combatant in Guantanamo", she says. (Davis 2011)

It would seem that the purpose of these comparisons is to set side by side "real" enemies, such as terrorists, and a whistleblower like Manning, contemplating on who truly constitutes an enemy and on what terms. They also, unfortunately, seem to imply that as opposed to Manning's treatment, what happens in Guantánamo and Abu Ghraib is a matter of course, a thing that is expected of such places, and thus at some level justifiable.

In her article "Pvt Manning proves 'slippery slope'", Hajjar discusses the issue of torture at length, arguing that Manning's handling is paving the way for more widespread torture of US citizens (2011). She intimates how "abusive tactics" similar to those Manning has faced in prison were initially authorised by the Bush administration to be used against suspected terrorists during the early years of the "war on terror". The rationale, according to Hajjar, was the following:

Torture advocates opined that the use of non-maiming techniques (i.e. "torture lite") is a lesser evil, and might be legitimately employed by American interrogators to break a recalcitrant terrorist suspected of possessing valuable intelligence (i.e. the whereabouts of that ticking bomb) in order to keep Americans safe.

Hajjar further argues that if these advocates had known that an American citizen would be subjected to techniques similar to those used by the CIA on Abu Zubaydah (one of the highest-ranking members of Al Qaeda), "their claims would not have gotten such traction in the mainstream media" (Hajjar 2011). According to her, Manning is living proof that opponents of torture were right in

saying that states using torture on enemies “embark down a slippery slope” towards its more common use: “States that utilise torture inevitably expand the reasons to justify its use”. Finally, what especially bothers Hajjar is that when it comes to Manning, there does not seem to be any justification:

But in Manning’s case, the rationale that undergirded the authorisation of interrogational abuse – the legitimate need for actionable intelligence to keep Americans safe – is entirely missing.

Manning had already been charged and was held in custody while awaiting her sentencing in a court of law. Shortly put, although she does not state it outright in her article, Hajjar seems to be casting Manning as but one part of the bigger picture, one node in the machine of the US justice system, one symptom of a disease that is gripping the United States. For Hajjar, Manning is proof that there is a “slippery slope” and that the US is on it, slowly sliding down.

Manning is also framed as the victim of the US government’s double standards, both in terms of being the wrong kind of whistleblower and committing the wrong kind of crimes. With whistleblowing, the argument made in the articles is simple: “the ‘crime’ he is accused of is something many US officials do with regularity: leak classified information in the public interest to news organisations” (Timm 2011; see 2 and 2.4 above). In another article, Timm provides an example about how a top secret State Department cable about Pakistan’s militant safe havens ended up on the pages of *The Washington Post*, with several government officials describing its content. He maintains that these officials will most likely not be investigated or prosecuted, while Manning is facing a heavy sentence for leaking cables whose classification level was not nearly as high as in the above case. This, according to Timm, goes on to prove the inherent hypocrisy of Obama’s “war on whistleblowers” (2012).

It would seem that what lies beneath this criticism of the United States’ double standards with whistleblowers is a conviction that there is something wrong with the US, and that persecuting whistleblowers is merely a symptom of the disease. Van Buren is along these lines in describing the discrepancy between the State Department, which “has leaked like an old boot” for years, and the sudden targeting of people even peripherally linked to leaking or whistleblowing: he argues that the government is trying to “turn us all into mini-Bradley Mannings” for something as minor as writing a blog entry with a link to WikiLeaks (which he had done). The target is not on the people who created a system that leaks like an old boot, or on the system itself. Instead of trying to find and fix the system’s flaws, the government is trying to find and get rid of the evidence that such flaws exist: the leakers. According to Van Buren, “[t]hat’s what frustrated bullies do – they pick on the ones

they think they can get away with beating up” (2011). Or, to formulate the conundrum differently, because treating the disease itself is difficult (and, at the same time, an admission that there *is* a disease), everything is done to address and suppress the symptoms.

The view that there is something wrong with the US, already noted in relation to the whistleblower frame above (see 5.2), is perhaps most clearly expressed by Falk in two articles. In the first one, he states that perhaps secrecy in diplomacy is justified to a degree and that laws punishing leakers are warranted. However, what must be taken into account are the context of the leak and the motivations of the leaker. What he calls for is not the kind of “harsh approach” Manning received but “leniency and empathy” towards someone “who steps out of line – seeking to allow a wider public of a democratic society to know a series of ‘inconvenient truths’”. Condemning disclosures that reveal unethical behaviour is wrong when that unethical behaviour is not condemned as well. In short, he is stating that a “healthy society” would protect whistleblowers, but the society in the United States is not that:

The coldness of the state is expressed by criminalising truth telling, branding it as virtually a form of treason, whereas a humane political community would seek to learn from those brave and dedicated enough to reveal to their citizen comrades that which is hidden because it should never have been allowed to take place.

To punish righteousness is the seminal sin of organised power that the Bible warns about over and over again, and the years of the modern cold state remain plugged on principle, with the help of laws that stifle the freedom of expression needed to ensure a lawful government. (Falk 2011)

In the other article, Falk provides what he sees as a solution to the problem of treating the disease as well as the symptoms:

At least, if there was a measure of good faith in Washington, it should have been possible to move forward on parallel paths: hold Manning nominally responsible for releasing classified materials, mitigated by his motives and absence of private gain, but vigorously repudiate and investigate the horrible crimes being committed against civilians in Iraq and Afghanistan, as well as the battlefield practices and training programs that give rise to such atrocities. (Falk 2012)

As for the other example of the government’s double standards, that of committing the wrong kind of crimes, the underlying argument is that the system is skewed to reward those who need punishment and vice versa. For example, Benjamin argues that Manning would find herself in more favourable circumstances if she had been on the Apache helicopter, shooting people on the ground, instead of leaking the video to WikiLeaks (2011; for a description of “Collateral Murder”, see 1). The same logic is duplicated in other articles as well:

All one needs to know about American justice is that if he [Manning] had murdered civilians and desecrated their corpses – if he had the moral capacity to commit war crimes, not the audacity to expose them – he'd be better off today. (Davis 2011)

It's telling that Manning's 35-year sentence is longer than those of five people convicted of actual terrorist activity, while the "harm" Manning is charged with causing is entirely speculative, and is arguably far outweighed by the good. (Rosenberg 2013b)

Rosenberg further argues that Obama continues what his predecessors started, namely covering up war crimes instead of doing the right thing and admitting them. Prosecuting Manning is, in his opinion, part of the cover-up (2013b). Davis, on the other hand, maintains that the US government is making an example of Manning for other who might like to think for themselves instead of following orders, because committing "war crimes" does not disrupt the functioning of the "war machine" as much as "a soldier standing up and refusing to be complicit in mass murder" (2011). President Obama, Manning's commander-in-chief, even publically declared her guilty before her trial had even begun (Davis 2011, Falk 2011).

In two articles, the media is also made complicit in victimising Manning. Schechter argues that "[m]ajor media outlets look out for their own interests first", which is, according to him, demonstrated in how media that had not attended Manning's trial showed up for the verdict and reported it without contextualisation (2013b). In other words, they reported the verdict without mentioning what kind of information Manning had leaked and why she had leaked it. Furthermore, the judge's decision to drop the aiding-the-enemy charge made headlines in several major news outlets but the 19 other charges with a possible 136-year prison sentence did not. In addition to implying that these media were only interested in the one charge that could directly affect them, Schechter contends that they fell for the trick by which the judge was made to seem "fair and unbalanced" (2013b). On the other hand, Fernandez (discussing a book on Manning written by American civil rights attorney Chase Madar) maintains that media speculate on Manning's motives in a very inappropriate way without considering the possibility that a rational human being made a rational decision based on rational ethical principles (i.e. they do not consider what Manning says in the chat logs to be reliable information) (2012). Instead, they resort to descriptions of Manning's emotional and psychological troubles: "the entire political and media establishment has unleashed its impromptu expertise in the field of psychoanalysis against Manning" (Fernandez 2012).

In summary, although the primary context for framing Manning as a victim is her treatment in prison, all the articles do not contextualise her victimhood to the harsh conditions of her incarceration. There are several occasions where the United States and its government are accused

of double standards when dealing with whistleblowers: some leaks of supposedly classified information are not even investigated while someone such as Manning, acting in accordance with a clear moral compass, is harassed and abused. In other words, Manning is being punished for being the wrong kind of a whistleblower. Furthermore, by contrasting her with people who took part in alleged war crimes, it is argued that committing such crimes pays better than exposing them, making Manning a wrong kind of “criminal” in the eyes of the US authorities.

5.4 Hero

A definition provided by the Oxford Dictionary of English states that a hero is “a person, typically a man, who is admired for their courage, outstanding achievements, or noble qualities” (“Hero”). In other words, the defining features of a hero are personal qualities and deeds as well as the admiration of others. As will be demonstrated below, in the context of the articles analysed in this study, emphasis on personal qualities and deeds and the evocation of feelings of gratitude and pride are an integral part of the hero frame. In this sense it comes close to Thorsen et al.’s study on the framing of Chelsea Manning, in which a hero is defined as “someone who had acted in a noble or courageous manner” (2013, 114). Within the articles, the hero frame was used only four times, twice in the early articles, after Manning was identified as the (then alleged) whistleblower, twice in August 2013, after she was sentenced to 35 years in prison.

One characteristic of the early hero framing is eagerness to hand Manning an award for her deeds. She is stated to deserve the Nobel Peace Prize more than Obama, with the added suggestion that Obama’s prize should be taken back and handed instead to Manning (LeVine 2010). In the article “Bradley Manning: American hero”, Madar goes to considerable lengths to demonstrate why Manning is a better recipient for the Presidential Medal of Freedom than former Secretary of Defence Robert Gates, “who managed two bloody disastrous wars about which the WikiLeaks-released documents revealed so much” (2011). Examples about Manning’s self-sacrificing deeds abound in the article (emphases mine):

He has *put his sanity and his freedom on the line* so that Americans might know what their government has done – and is still doing – globally.

Bradley Manning is only the latest in a long line of whistleblowers in and out of uniform who have *risked everything* to put our country back on the right track.

At great personal cost, Bradley Manning has given the foreign policy elite the public supervision

it so badly needs.

At immense personal cost, Bradley Manning has upheld a great American tradition of transparency in statecraft and for that he should be an American hero, not an American felon.

...for his gift to the republic, *purchased at great price*, he deserves not prison, but a Presidential Medal of Freedom and the *heartfelt gratitude* of his country. (Madar 2011)

As the final example above suggests, selfless action done for the good of one's country should be met with gratitude on the part of that country's people. This gratitude is also something that Madar (2011) aims to call forth (emphases mine):

Even if US foreign policy was firmly on the wrong side of things, *we should be proud* that at least one American – Bradley Manning – was on the right side.

Thanks to the whistleblowing revelations attributed to Bradley Manning, we at least have a far clearer picture of the problems we face in trying to supervise our own government. (Madar 2011)

The same kind of gratitude is also invoked by Falk (2013, emphasis mine):

We, as citizens of the world, should be *thankful for the sacrifices* made by individuals such as Julian Assange, Bradley Manning, and Edward Snowden, surely deserving heroes of our time!

Rosenberg provides another kind of hero framing by drawing a comparison between Manning and one of the greatest civil rights leaders in American history: "By following in Ellsberg's footsteps, Chelsea Manning is far closer to Martin Luther King than Barack Obama could ever dream of being" (2013b). The hero framing is further strengthened by suggesting that Manning's revelations forced President Obama to withdraw all American troops from Iraq, thus saving American lives, and assisted in stoking up the democratisation process of Muslim countries during the Arab Spring.²³

It is also important to note that within the sample of articles analysed, the line between whistleblower and hero turned out to be more than a little hazy. As was already seen in 5.2, the articles with whistleblower frame gave very openly positive connotations to Manning's actions, making it sometimes difficult to distinguish the actual framing. Thus it might be aptest to imagine hero and whistleblower to exist on different points of the same continuum: on the extreme ends they may be quite different, but in the middle, they significantly overlap. On the other hand, as was noted in 5.2 above, one could also argue that the view that Manning is a hero is ultimately based on

²³ Both of these developments might now be viewed in less positive terms because of the rise of the terrorist group Isis and the worsening situation in Iraq, Afghanistan, and most of the Arab Spring countries, most specifically Syria (cf. 3).

the view that she is a whistleblower who made public information that revealed malpractice and that people had a right to know.

In summary, the evocation of feelings of gratitude and pride towards Manning is a central factor of the hero frame in the articles analysed. However, there is also the element of self-sacrifice that stands apart from the definition of a hero presented at the beginning of this chapter. It is also worth mentioning that although most of the articles make no references to religion, the theme of self-sacrifice is such an integral part of Christianity that the similarities to how Manning is described are difficult to disregard. In short, she is portrayed as a person who has, at great personal cost, sacrificed her own freedom so that “we” (primarily the American people) would have knowledge of what is being done in our name. For this reason she should be shown admiration and gratitude.

5.5 Traitor

A traitor, according to the Oxford Dictionary of English, is “a person who betrays someone or something, such as a friend, cause, or principle (“Traitor”). In the articles analysed for this study, traitor refers to a person who wilfully and knowingly has betrayed his or her country by acting against its laws in a manner that might put the security of the nation and of individuals in danger. It closely follows Thorsen et al.’s definition of a villain, which is “someone who acted immorally and without justification, his actions being seen as having put national security or the security of individuals at risk” (2013, 115). However, I chose to replace the word *villain* with *traitor* because, in my opinion, *villain* is too vague a term for the purposes of this thesis and because *traitor* better encompasses the full contents of the frame as it is used in the articles analysed here.

Framing Chelsea Manning as a traitor is quite rare, only occurring in four of the 35 articles analysed, and only employed as a secondary frame. Three of these four instances are dated in June and July of 2013, which is explained by Manning’s trial taking place around that time: the traitor frame conveys her portrayal by the prosecution and others who have a negative view of her. It is also important to note that what differentiates the traitor frame from all the other frames employed in Al Jazeera English’s opinion articles is that it is only used sarcastically or when quoting or paraphrasing those who see Manning in a negative light. In other words, the writers of the four articles in which this frame can be found do not use it to communicate their own views on Manning; quite the contrary, in fact, as will be demonstrated below.

The most straightforward framing of Manning as a traitor is presented in a quote attributed to Captain Joe Morrow, the military prosecutor in the court case against her, “who charged Manning with a dangerous crime”:

“This is a case about a soldier who systematically harvested hundreds of thousands of classified documents and dumped them onto the internet, into the hands of the enemy – material he knew, based on his training, would put the lives of his fellow soldiers at risk,” he said. (Schechter 2013a)

The terms used here are unequivocally negative: “systematically harvesting” implies premeditation and “dumping” a careless attitude, while implications of working for “the enemy” directly correlates with “traitor” and putting “the lives of his fellow soldiers at risk” suggests betrayal. The quote is not commented on or refuted in any way, but it is directly followed by a quote from Manning’s defence lawyer:

“He was selective. He had access to literally hundreds of millions of documents as an all-source analyst, and these were the documents he released. And he released these documents because he was hoping to make the world a better place.” (Schechter 2013a)

In this way, by presenting two opposite views side by side as equals, the choice of which one to believe is left to the reader. Nevertheless, when the wider context of the article defines Manning as a whistleblower and talks about how negative the atmosphere has become for free press, a single quote framing Manning as a traitor loses most of its weight.

Following on the same lines as in the example above, all the instances of framing Manning as a traitor are solely attributed to the government or its representatives, as is the case in the following:

The government’s argument is basically this: Manning “aided the enemy” because he gave classified information to a media organisation. The media organisation published this information on the internet. Al-Qaeda has access to the internet, and because some WikiLeaks cables were allegedly found on Osama bin Laden’s computer, Manning should be tried as someone akin to a traitor. (Timm 2013)

While bringing forth the government’s view on Manning’s actions, Timm is also distancing himself from that view and simultaneously questioning the arguably curious logic of unrestricted access to the Internet leading to someone being labelled a traitor. As Goffman puts it, “when a writer wants to suggest that a word (or a phrase) he is using is not one that he himself would ordinarily use, he sets it off in quotation marks, framing it so that it will be taken as a usage, not literally a word in use” (1986, 317). Hence the quotation marks around “aiding the enemy”. The same path is followed in the next excerpt as well:

The most serious of the charges against Manning is the capital offense of “aiding the enemy.” (Team Obama has made it clear it won’t seek the death penalty, but a life sentence is possible.) The enemy that the prosecution has in mind is not Wikileaks or the global public but Al Qaeda; because this group had access to the internet, the logic goes, they could read Manning’s disclosures just like everyone else. (Madar 2013b)

Here, again, the view of “Team Obama” is openly presented, but distancing is managed by the quotation marks, similarly to above. Also, the phrase “the logic goes” is used to draw attention to the logic, which in the contemporary Internet-saturated world does seem somewhat excessive. Of course, with both the articles (as well as Schechter’s article discussed above), the primary framework employed is that of whistleblower, which already sets the tone against any vilification of Manning.

The most interesting case about framing Manning as a traitor is presented by Madar’s article “WikiLeaks, Manning and the Pentagon: Blood on whose hands?” (2012a). “Washington officials may bemoan the nightmare of civilian casualties – but only if they can be pinned on a 24-year-old Army private first class named Bradley Manning”, the article states, referring to the US government’s close-mouthed attitude to talking about civilian deaths in the Iraq and Afghan Wars (Madar 2012a). What follows is a cavalcade of US government officials condemning Manning’s actions, blaming her for endangering people’s lives all around the world and for threatening the national security of the United States. Each condemnation is then contrasted with what its maker has been doing in the war, and the bundle neatly tied with a question on who actually deserves condemnation. The following is one example among many:

Robert Gates, who served as secretary of defence under George W Bush and then Barack Obama, also spoke sternly of Manning’s leaks, accusing him of “moral culpability”. He added: “And that’s where I think the verdict is ‘guilty’ on WikiLeaks. They have put this out without any regard whatsoever for the consequences.”

This was, of course, the same Robert Gates who pushed for escalation in Afghanistan in 2009 and, in March 2011, flew to the Kingdom of Bahrain to offer his own personal “reassurance of support” to a ruling monarchy already busy shooting and torturing non-violent civilian protesters. So again, when it comes to blood and indifference to consequences, Bradley Manning – or Robert Gates?

By using irony, Madar turns the framing of Manning as a traitor on its head. After all, government officials are the archetypal sources in news stories, and their opinions in matters pertaining to their area of expertise are often presented without commentary to the contrary. As in the example above, by adding selected titbits of background information, what superficially seems a series of high-

ranking government officials speaking on behalf of the government turns into a series of hypocrites preaching one thing while practicing another.

Madar gives the same treatment to a large part of the media for “clamber[ing] aboard the bandwagon, blaming WikiLeaks and Manning for damage done by wars they once energetically cheered on”, and to non-profit think-tanks who have been “selectively blind when it comes to civilian carnage” (2012a). Both, according to him, have expressed their shock at the possible blood on Manning’s hands while failing to bring up the number of civilian casualties caused by the US presence in the Middle East. The dot on the i, in Madar’s opinion, is that all of those he criticises have failed to note that “terrorists themselves have freely confessed that what motivated their acts of wanton violence has been the damage done by foreign military occupation back home or simply in the Muslim world” (2012a). The implied conclusion is that Manning might have realised something that US foreign policy experts and the media have overlooked in their eagerness to condemn her actions (see 5.2 and 5.3).

To sum up, none of the articles analysed actually frames Manning as a traitor. Such a framing is only used in order to contrast what the author of the article is saying with the opinion of the government of the United States. At the same time, by considering Manning to be a whistleblower (the primary framing in the four articles with the secondary frame of traitor) and thus morally justified in her actions, the authors of these four articles also set themselves apart from the US official policies.

5.6 Transgender

The final and rarest of the frames in the Al Jazeera English opinion articles is transgender, which was only used twice: once as primary framing, once as secondary. The Oxford Dictionary of English defines a transgender person as someone “whose self-identity does not conform unambiguously to conventional notions of male and female gender (“Transgender”). The Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD) is along the same lines, stating that “[t]ransgender is an umbrella term for people whose gender identity and/or gender expression or behaviour differs from the sex they were assigned to at birth” (quoted in Frost 2012, 13). The term pertains to Manning in that she identifies with the female sex even though her biological sex is male (see 2.3).

In his article “To the right and centre-right, Chelsea Manning is an LGBTraitor”, Davis takes at face value that Manning is what she says she is: a transgender person, a woman in a man’s body

(2013b). The emphasis seems to be on acceptance and tolerance, as can be deduced from the following: “It’s not hard, identifying someone as they wish to be identified. It’s actually really easy and it’s called politeness. But sometimes bigotry and political partisanship get in the way of good manners and basic decency.” What Davis goes on to show is the kind of treatment a transgender person can be subjected to in the media.

To cast those with opposed views on Manning in a ludicrous light, Davis makes use of straightforward insults as well as irony:

Erick Erickson, a conservative pundit, former CNN contributor and all-American dumbass, chose to react to the news of Manning’s transition with the over-compensating masculinity of a 13-year-old bully who wets the bed. “Chelsea,” he wrote on Twitter, is “someone who won’t man up [*editor’s not: do you get it?*] to what they’ve done and instead goes for a sympathetic distraction in the press”. Because as anyone familiar with the corporate press (and the American public) will tell you, nothing garners more sympathy than a recently convicted national security whistle-blower – “traitor” in the parlance of our times – coming out as transgender. (Davis 2013b, emphasis in the original)

The point here seems to be that being transgender in today’s America is not easy for anyone, least of all for a person who has received a lot of publicity by leaking classified government information to the press and has been sentenced to decades in prison for doing it. It would seem that in Davis’s view, when someone publicly comes out as transgender in the contemporary media-saturated society, it can hardly be termed “a sympathetic distraction in the press” (2013b).

It’s not the first time liberals have been less than sensitive when dealing with the gender identity issues of a whistleblower who embarrassed their president. Earlier chat transcripts with an undercover informant revealed that Manning had long wondered if she was in the right body. But rather than display sympathy for a young person quite predictably questioning their identity – most of the punditry class got to do that in college on mommy and daddy’s dime – liberal Democrats interpreted Manning’s personal questions as signs of mental illness that they chose to believe explained her whistle-blowing. (Davis 2013b)

Davis seems to be saying that liberal Democrats cannot be sympathetic to Manning’s confusion about her identity because then they would show sympathy towards someone who worked against their president. In other words, in this case politics determines publicly expressed attitudes.

The final straw for Davis is a column on the “centre-left website *The Daily Beast*” in which it is speculated that Manning just might have a wonderful time in prison because of being transgender:

“When I was in the joint,” Frazier wrote, “rape wasn’t just something you could let happen to you.” In other words: the victims wanted it. Further, “From what I witnessed, it was quite common for a transgender inmate to get ‘married’ behind bars” to that “big, dreaded prison dude

known as ‘Bubba’.” Bubba, in some cases, “would become a pimp, and both of them would be ‘prison rich’ as the johns line up outside her cell to pay for her sexual favors.” “One thing is almost a certainty,” Frazier’s editor for some reason let him continue, “celibacy probably won’t be an option for Chelsea Manning.” For some, Frazier wrote, prison is a prison, but “we need to keep in mind that one person’s prison is another person’s palace. Chelsea Manning could become the queen bee.” (Davis 2013b)

However, Davis seems to be so busy demonstrating his outrage about reactions to Manning’s coming out that the article does not provide any constructive ideas on how to write about a transgender person, apart from emphasising the aforementioned “politeness”, “basic decency”, and “good manners”. This is where the other example of transgender framing of Manning steps in.

Eisenstein’s main point in her article “Whistleblowing on wars and genders” is how being transgender may have contributed to Manning becoming a whistleblower:

Whereas Manning said she had been “troubled” and that this may have led to harming others, it is more likely that the terror she faced for being a woman in a male body caused whatever confusion there was. But maybe Breanna and Chelsea’s loneliness and pain assisted her identification with the powerless against the US military policy. (Eisenstein 2013)

While she primarily frames Manning as a whistleblower, she also tries to tackle the complex interplay between the different personas that Manning has displayed in public:

My embrace of Manning is as a whistleblower of keen ethical clarity, and as a member of a sexual minority and distinct gender identity who deserves equal rights and treatment. I am against all forms of terror – especially the kind that makes it hard to feel comfortable in our own bodies, whatever they may be. Manning was terrorised as a youth for being gay and now will probably suffer dearly for transitioning to a woman.

Manning’s gift to the US public is to have exposed a militarism that is harmful, deceitful and devastating, alongside a full transparency of her personal/sexual self. That she has done so in a public statement read on the Today show by her lawyer David Coombs makes clear that her commitments are to the wider public, not simply to herself. (Eisenstein 2013)

In short, Eisenstein is entwining Manning’s revelations – the documents she passed on to WikiLeaks and the public statement declaring about her sexuality – into her being simultaneously a whistleblower and a transgender person. The one might not exist without the other: if she was not transgender, she might never have identified with “the powerless” and never become a whistleblower. On the other hand, being a whistleblower may have made it easier to also reveal her true identity.

There may be several reasons as to why the transgender frame was used in only two articles. The obvious, of course, is that Manning did not come out as transgender until after she had been tried

and sentenced, at which point her visibility in news dropped due to the case being closed. It is certainly why Thorsen et al. found no such framing in their study: the issue had not been raised and discussed within their timeframe. Another possible explanation is that an individual's sexual identity and sexual preferences are not the main fodder of news for international news channels such as Al Jazeera English. With Manning, what mattered was that she made available classified information about the sole superpower in the world, and was severely punished for it. It would indeed be interesting to explore the transgender framing in the context of more popular-minded media, such as the tabloid press, or social media, such as blogs or Twitter.

6 Conclusion

One of the main functions of media is to serve as watchdogs of power. As was argued in chapter 4, the power of the media is the power to define and give meaning. They do this by selecting, highlighting, and interpreting certain aspects of reality as suits their needs. In other words, they frame reality: provide (often routinised) definitions of the situation at hand to their audiences (Entman 2004, 25; Karvonen 2000, 78; Gitlin 2003, 109). In their watchdog function, the way media frame those in positions of power has a direct bearing on the attitudes the public has towards the powerful. Whistleblowers, on the other hand, help media in their watchdog function by providing them with information, often concerning those with power, that they could not have obtained otherwise (see 2 above). However, when the media turn their gaze on the whistleblowers, they use the same rules of framing as with the powerful. Thus, the framing of whistleblowers in media affects the views and attitudes the public, including potential future whistleblowers, have on them. As Goffman puts it, media reports are not merely reflections of what has happened but may also influence “later occurrences of the real thing” (1986, 79). Thus, negative framings of whistleblowing might dissuade people from leaking information, whereas positive and supportive framings could serve as encouragement for potential future whistleblowers.

As this study has shown, when it comes to the framing of WikiLeaks' top information provider Chelsea Manning in the opinion articles on Al Jazeera English's website, the overall picture is certainly positive towards and supportive of her. The frames employed are, from most to least common, whistleblower, victim, hero, traitor, and transgender. The whistleblower frame describes her as a person driven by the force of her conscience and morality to make public information that people have a right to know (see 5.2). The victim frame concentrates on her unfair treatment: her humiliating prison conditions bordering on torture as well as being on the receiving end of the US

government's hypocrisy concerning committing war crimes and whistleblowing (see 5.3). The hero frame sets out to evoke feelings of gratitude and pride towards Manning, describing her as a self-sacrificing individual working for the good of others (see 5.4). Even the traitor frame was used in a supportive way to set apart the views of Manning's opponents from the opinions of the articles' writers and even ironically contrast "Manning the traitor" with those who the writers deem to actually have blood on their hands (see 5.5). The final frame, that of transgender, is set apart from the others, which revolve around the concept of whistleblowing. It describes Manning's sexual identity separately from other aspects of her life, although one of the two articles containing the frame argues that being transgender might have contributed to her feelings of connectedness with the disenfranchised and the powerless and, consequently, made her a whistleblower (see 5.6).

A significant feature connecting most of the frames is the view that there is something rotten in the United States. The Al Jazeera English opinions detail the morally corrupt nature of US foreign and security policies, especially in relation to the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, and describe how violations of basic ethical principles and even human rights are allowed and even encouraged by the US. The overall argument of the articles seems to be that the United States is gripped by a disease of which Chelsea Manning is a symptom. Rather than addressing the morally corrupt attitudes that allow violations and changing the morally corrupt policies to more humane ones, the articles argue that the United States is attacking Manning because she had the audacity to expose the corruptness of the system. Instead of curing the disease, the articles seem to be saying, they try to merely get rid of the symptoms.

Of course, what must be taken into consideration is that the articles analysed in this study come from the website of Al Jazeera English, the first English language news network to originate in the Middle East, more precisely Qatar. A sizeable amount of the documents that Manning gave to WikiLeaks, notably the Afghan and Iraq War Logs, thus concern Al Jazeera's home turf. They reveal information that helps shed light on what the US had been doing in the area. They give insight into the attitudes, working methods, and conduct of the US troops. Because the revelations made on the basis of the leaked information are mostly negative towards the US, they give Al Jazeera English as a local news operation a motive to support the person who facilitated them. Perhaps this is one reason as to why Al Jazeera English's opinion articles frame Manning in such a positive light.

On the other hand, when Al Jazeera's home base Qatar "embraced Western democratic reforms, its military ties with the United States and coalition forces grew as well" (Powers 2012, 14). In other

words, Qatar is an ally of the US. However, as was discussed in chapter 3 above, despite criticism and even calls for censorship, cooperation between Qatar and the US has not prevented the news organisation from broadcasting content that has been deemed anti-American by US authorities. In comparison, when it comes to Chelsea Manning, Al Jazeera's approach could be termed devious. As seen in chapter 5.1, the network's own news articles provide a balanced and impartial picture of the situation, but the opinion articles published on its website provide a different story. As was seen especially in chapters 5.2-5.5 above, Manning is framed in openly positive terms while at the same time the government and the entire administrative system of the US are heavily criticised. Whether by design or not, by placing all the criticism in opinion articles which have been equipped with the disclaimer "The views expressed in this article are the author's own and do not necessarily reflect Al Jazeera's editorial policy", and with most of the writers being Americans or other Westerners, Al Jazeera English manages to neatly avert any accusations about anti-American sentiment aimed at itself.

On the other hand, as an international media organisation, Al Jazeera English does not have to expend as much energy on staying on speaking terms with the US government as national news organisations in the United States. In this sense it shares some similarities with WikiLeaks, which, as noted above in chapter 2.2, as a stateless organisation is not under the jurisdiction of any particular country, unlike national media (Beckett and Ball 2012, 23-24). Al Jazeera English is, according to Schlosberg, one of the "new sources of pluralism" in global news media (2013, 16). On its home turf in the Middle East, it has already challenged the hegemony of such Anglo-American news operations as CNN and BBC World by providing alternative frames for the US-led "war on terror" (ibid.). When it comes to the subject matter of the current study, taking into consideration the aforementioned fact that many of the writers seem to be American, the question one would need to answer is whether the Al Jazeera opinions resemble corresponding American coverage of Manning or whether they provide alternative views on the subject. Whatever the answer may be, Handley and Rutigliano maintain that alternative interpretations to the dominant narratives generally presented in major media are not readily available in the US (2012, 745). According to them, "Arab news networks have made oppositional interpretations more available to Western audiences, but Western news media have hegemonically managed contra-flow by framing Arab networks as untrustworthy, irrational, immoral, and unethical" (2012, 747). This would be a matter worthy of further study: does Al Jazeera English fulfil its aim (examined in chapter 3) of being the voice for the voiceless, the underprivileged, and the subaltern and provide a platform for alternative frames and interpretations?

Unfortunately, answering this question and many more besides is not within the scope of this study. As was already discussed at the end of chapter 4, this thesis does not purport to provide a definitive and generalisable picture of the framing of Chelsea Manning. It merely explores the frames applied in Al Jazeera English's opinion articles as well as the wider context within which they are used. This is why some ideas on further objects of study may be in order. Firstly, there is the question of how the framing of Manning in Al Jazeera English's opinion articles compares with her framing in other media around the world. As has been noted above, such studies would appear to be in short supply; I only managed to find one (Thorsen et al., 2013). Also, as was mentioned above in chapter 3, although sharing the brand name, Al Jazeera English is not a translation of the content of Al Jazeera Arabic; they have their own journalists and broadcasting styles. This raises the question of whether Manning's framing differs between the English and Arabic language variants, and if it does, in what ways.

What is clear, however, is that in Al Jazeera English's opinion articles, Manning is presented squarely as part of the Western, and especially American, tradition of whistleblowing alongside Daniel Ellsberg, Julian Assange, and Edward Snowden, among others (see chapter 2-2.5). Perhaps due to the writers being almost exclusively from Western countries, the discussion is kept securely in the Western cultural sphere, with no mentions made of whistleblowers from other corners of the globe.²⁴ Thus, as far as deeds go Chelsea Manning is one whistleblower among many. However, as Ungar points out, "the WikiLeaks disclosures [which Manning facilitated] draw attention to an important lesson: the old-fashioned notion that democracy cannot function effectively without the informed consent of the governed, which requires timely access to accurate information across a broad spectrum of official activity. That access is more threatened than ever, as the mountain of needlessly classified government documents grows daily, and the result is to increase public suspicion and weaken government's credibility" (Ungar 2011, 37). According to him, declassification of documents would make leaks both less necessary and less likely to take place (ibid.).

At present moment, it does not look likely that this turn of events will take place, at least when it comes to the United States. Even though the country's current president, Barack Obama, promised at the time of his inauguration to make his administration open and transparent, this promise has not seen actualisation. As was mentioned in chapter 2.4, for journalists, the current government is the

²⁴ For instance, no mention is made of Al Jazeera's big local scoop, the Palestine Papers, a cache of various documents mapping the peace process between Israel and Palestine from 1999 to 2010 that Al Jazeera made public in 2010. All the documents and Al Jazeera's articles are available on their website at www.aljazeera.com/palestinepapers/.

most hostile and the least approachable in US history (Downey 2013). If the media do not have access to information that the public should know, they cannot fulfil their watchdog function, their job of holding the powerful accountable for their actions. As Schlosberg maintains, “[t]hrough investigative reporting in particular, journalists can institute a form of answerability and enforcement across the board, calling not only public officials to account, but also corporations, the security services, religious institutions, NGOs and even the media themselves” (2013, 3). When journalists cannot access the information needed to enforce accountability, whistleblowers are needed to provide it (Mazumdar 2013, 200).

Thus we come back to the beginning of this chapter, to the power of the media: the power to define. By framing, media provide definitions of situations to their audiences, and these definitions in turn affect the audiences’ attitudes. By framing Chelsea Manning in a positive and supportive manner and showing their endorsement of her deeds, Al Jazeera English’s opinion articles are, in their modest way, trying to influence people’s attitudes towards her and towards whistleblowers more generally.

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Appendix 1: List of Opinion Articles Analysed

Date	Writer	Title
9 Dec 2010	Mark LeVine	WikiLeaks: Call of Duty
10 Mar 2011	Medea Benjamin	War crimes good, exposing them bad
15 Mar 2011	Lisa Hajjar	Pvt Manning proves 'slippery slope'
3 May 2011	Richard Falk	Is limitless freedom of expression possible?
9 Jul 2011	Chase Madar	Bradley Manning: American hero
3 Oct 2011	Peter Van Buren	Freedom isn't free at the State Department
16 Dec 2011	Charles Davis	No justice for Bradley Manning
21 Dec 2011	Trevor Timm	Bradley Manning and the miscarriage of justice
24 Jan 2012a	Chase Madar	WikiLeaks, Manning and the Pentagon: Blood on whose hands?
9 Mar 2012	Trevor Timm	WikiLeaks, whistleblowers and wars
25 Apr 2012	Belen Fernandez	The passion of Bradley Manning
26 Apr 2012b	Chase Madar	What the laws of war allow
1 May 2012	Richard Falk	Opening the other eye: Charles Taylor and selective accountability
10 Jun 2012	Paul Rosenberg	The slumbering giant of American democracy
14 Aug 2012	Charlotte Silver	A revolution against 'the culture of leaks'?
20 Sep 2012	Hamid Dabashi	Beyond Insulting the Prophet: Defying Hypocrisies East and West
23 Feb 2013a	Chase Madar	Why massive security leaks are good for us
4 Mar 2013a	Mark LeVine	Bradley Manning's American dream, if only...
3 Jun 2013	Dan Hind	Bradley Manning: Enlisting the enlightenment
3 Jun 2013	Trevor Timm	Bradley Manning's trial threatens the rights of all future whistleblowers
8 Jun 2013a	Danny Schechter	'We Steal Secrets': The new film about WikiLeaks infuriates WikiLeaks
10 Jun 2013b	Mark LeVine	Edward Snowden's jihad
16 Jun 2013a	Paul Rosenberg	Obama's crackpot realism and the real crime of Edward Snowden
4 Jul 2013	Joseph Nevins	The silent empire
8 Jul 2013	Tarak Barkawi	Espionage and hypocrisy
12 Jul 2013a	Charles Davis	It's not always right to keep your word
24 Jul 2013b	Chase Madar	The sky darkens for American journalism
26 Jul 2013	Tom Engelhardt	How to be a rogue superpower
7 Aug 2013b	Danny Schechter	Obama gets 'personal' as rift with Russia over Snowden grows
8 Aug 2013	Richard Falk	Snowden's Asylum: 'It's the law, stupid'
23 Aug 2013	Sarah Kendzior	Justice in a 'Nation of Laws': The Manning verdict
24 Aug 2013b	Charles Davis	To the right and centre-right, Chelsea Manning is an LGBTraitor
28 Aug 2013	Zillah Eisenstein	Whistleblowing on wars and genders
29 Aug 2013b	Paul Rosenberg	Obama is closer to Nixon than to MLK

Appendix 2: List of News Articles Analysed

Date	Title
1 Mar 2013	Manning pleads guilty to minor charges
10 Apr 2013	US judge raises bar in Bradley Manning case
9 Jul 2013	Manning defence shows video of Baghdad attack
10 Jul 2013	Defence rests in Manning Wikileaks trial
15 Jul 2013	Manning lawyers urge judges to dismiss charge
19 Jul 2013	US judge rules not to drop Manning charge
26 Jul 2013	Manning a traitor to US, says prosecutor
29 Jul 2013	US court to rule in Manning case
30 Jul 2013	Manning arrives at court for verdict
31 Jul 2013	Manning acquitted of aiding the enemy
31 Jul 2013	Manning sentencing hearing gets under way
1 Aug 2013	US army overwhelmed by Manning leaks
6 Aug 2013	Judge reduces potential sentence for Manning
12 Aug 2013	Defence focuses on Manning's mental health
15 Aug 2013	Manning apologises in WikiLeaks case
21 Aug 2013	Manning to be sentenced in Wikileaks case
21 Aug 2013	Manning sentenced to 35 years in prison
22 Aug 2013	Manning says he wants to live as a woman
4 Sep 2013	Manning seeks presidential pardon